



Ethnic Albanians flash the victory sign on their way to the funeral of Agon Rahmani, who was killed by Serbian police. PHOTO: VANIN BERKOVIC

Milosevic and Kosovars agree to hold weekly talks for peace

KOSOVO Albanian leaders held their first meeting last week with the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, and agreed to hold weekly meetings to try to halt the province's escalating war, reports Jonathan Steele in Belgrade.

Mr Milosevic said, "This meeting could be considered as the start toward a peaceful solution of the Kosovo crisis."

Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said: "It seems there is a readiness to move ahead toward

a peaceful political solution to the Kosovo issue."

In spite of protest resignations by some of his team, Mr Rugova went ahead with the Belgrade meeting brokered by the United States special envoy, Richard Holbrooke.

The encounter was never intended as a negotiating session, but was designed to break the ice before delegations from the two sides start talks in Pristina, the Kosovo capital.

Only then will it become clear whether Mr Milosevic is willing

to make serious concessions towards granting the sort of autonomy the province enjoyed until 1989, with its own parliament and police. With most Kosovans demanding full independence, anything less would be difficult for Mr Rugova to accept.

So far Belgrade has offered only cultural autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia. Ethnic Albanians, who make up 90 per cent of the population, would get the same representation as other ethnic minorities on several low-level committees.

At last week's meeting Mr Rugova was flanked by four advisers, including the former communist leader Mahmut Bakalli and the editor of the nationalist independent daily Koha Ditore, Veton Surroi. Neither knew of Mr Rugova's agreement to meet Mr Milosevic until it was announced by the US envoy the day before.

Mr Holbrooke had held meetings with Mr Rugova at his home. Two members of Mr Rugova's advisory team resigned when the deal was announced.

The Week

US LAW enforcement officers arrested bankers from 124 Mexico's largest financial institutions on charges linking them to Latin American drug cartels in what officials described as the biggest money laundering investigation in US history.

XAVIERE THIERY, the wife of the mayor of Paris, was remanded in police custody as evidence mounted of a decade-long pattern of abuse, including illicit party funding at the town hall that was run for 16 years by Jacques Chirac before he was elected French president.

ALL tobacco advertising is to be banned in Europe after the European Parliament in Strasbourg voted by 514 to 201 to defeat a blocking amendment on the legality of the ban.

TIBETAN activists fasting in New Delhi to protest against Chinese rule of their homeland suspended their hunger strike on its 18th day after 102 from several countries promised to attend their concerns.

THE worst forest fires for half a century are burning across Mexico, threatening communities and virgin rainforest and causing smoke to drift across the US to cause health warnings.

GUNMEN in Sri Lanka shot and killed the first man to be elected in 15 years in Jaffna, a former Tamil separatist stronghold in the north recently seized by the country's army.

FELIX SOMM, a Swiss national and former head of the German subsidiary of CompuServe, the Internet provider, went on trial in Munich charged with disseminating child, animal and violent pornography in cyberspace.

THOUSANDS of people marched in three Turkish cities to demand that the gunmen who shot and seriously wounded the human rights activist Altan Bektas in Ankara be caught and brought to justice.

AN INTERCEPT missile being developed to guard US troops suffered its fifth setback when it failed to hit its target at test range in New Mexico.

AS AN outpouring of respect and admiration for the late Frank Sinatra, his family squibled over the dead singer's \$200 million business empire.

PRESIDENT BIL Clinton addressed the World Trade Organization in Geneva on Tuesday to urge attempts to preserve the free trade in goods and services. President Fidel Castro of Cuba said the front row, between the US and the rest of the world, is the most important.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY

May 24-30

Women in Iran targeted by new laws

Julian Borger in Tehran

HAVING lost one battle after another at the polls, in the courts and in the streets, Iran's conservatives have launched a counter-offensive against President Mahmoud Khatami. This time they are using one of their strongest weapons — the parliament — on the country's most emotive battleground: women's rights.

Last week members of the Majlis (the Islamic consultative assembly) finished two bills which together represent a powerful yank back on the hands of Iran's social clock. If passed, the legislation would outlaw press coverage of domestic violence, stifle criticism of sex affecting women and segregate social services.

The bills go further than even the strict Islamic code enforced under Ayatollah Khomeini, at a time when the new president is trying to judge society towards a more relaxed interpretation of religious law.

They target women at a time when there is a female vice-president, women are taking up a wider variety of jobs, and many have been challenging the taboos of the Islamic revolution by pushing their hair (headscarves) back millimetre by millimetre.

President Khatami's culture minister, Akbari Mojtahedi, said the bills, but denied they would reverse the trend towards reform. The reforms will not break. They are the support of the entire nation, they are like a waterfall.

The medical legislation would require parallel healthcare systems for men and women. The press bill bans the "exhibition of women's images" and outlaw "the creation of conflicts between men and women by propagating women's rights outside the legal and Islamic framework".

The second clause aims to prevent coverage of domestic violence in the increasingly varied range of newspapers, and to stifle growing debate over the application to women of Islamic law.

Shirin Ebadi, a human rights lawyer in Tehran, said these laws are to turn back the clock. They are supposed to create disappointment among the women who voted for Khatami. They are meant to create lethargy again. You will think yesterday was better than today, and it will stop you going forward.

The overwhelming victory by President Khatami, a moderate cleric who won 70 per cent of the vote a year ago, stunned conservatives who have struggled to limit his powers. A conservative attempt to impose Tehran's moderate mayor, Gholnosh Hassan Karubi, on fraud charges was abandoned last month after supporters demanded his release on bail.

Mohammad Nobakht, the head of the Majlis budget committee, rejected allegations that the bills are a political attack on the president.

The intention is to uphold Islamic laws in order to serve society better. The belief behind them is that women are separate beings who should be protected by laws as they're not used as tools, Mr Nobakht said, although he added that he has reservations over the expediency of the medical bill.

US firm 'to patent key gene codes'

Paul Brown and Martin Walker in Brussels

A UNITED STATES multinational company has announced plans to unravel the entire human genetic code by 2002 and sell the information to scientific institutions and drug companies — patenting the most valuable gene sequences to protect its investment.

The decision came last week on the day the European Parliament agreed a controversial European Union directive that allows companies to patent human, plant and animal genes and so charge royalties on medical or agricultural applications.

The US project, privately funded by the Perkin-Elmer Corporation of Norwalk, Connecticut, follows a technical breakthrough by the company which allows robot machines to plot the human gene sequences 10 times faster and more cheaply than previously thought possible.

The company aims to make a profit by banking by several years in a federal effort to achieve the same results. The company has teamed up with J. Craig Venter, a controversial figure who pioneered isolating gene sequences, patenting them and selling them to companies. He now heads the non-profit Institute for Genome Research, in Rockville.

Tony White, chief executive officer of Perkin-Elmer, said: "We are not a philanthropic organisation, we have a revenue model for this. We are sure people will want to buy the information."

He said most of the information would be available to companies and scientific institutions on a pay-to-view basis on sophisticated web sites. If necessary, we will patent 100 to 300 of the very significant genes, but we do not know yet. We will license those genes. We do not want to hold them hostage. We want to contract people for research."

Euro law page 6



Palestinians carry the body of a protester shot dead in the Gaza Strip last week. PHOTOGRAPH: AMNED JAGALLAH

Israelis kill eight Arabs during clashes

ISRAELI troops shot dead eight Palestinians demonstrators, including two boys, as protests to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of Israel descended into the bloodiest clashes seen in the West Bank and Gaza since 1989, writes Julian Borger in Ramallah.

Last week's killings looked likely to trigger a new wave of unrest. The Palestinian leadership has tried to keep a lid on a growing sense of frustration, banking on progress in peace talks led by the United States.

Palestinian police made some effort, but were unable to restrain the crowd. Israeli sharpshooters took up positions on a steep slope above the road and targeted the stone throwers with rubber-coated metal bullets normally used for crowd control. Hundreds of Ramallah residents

injured in Gaza, and more than 100 in the West Bank, where Israeli forces opened fire with rubber-coated metal bullets at crowds of stone-throwing youths in the cities of Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin. There were also clashes in East Jerusalem.

Protests erupted soon after ceremonies to commemorate the exile and dispossession of the Palestinian people in the 1948 war which established the Jewish state. Palestinians know the day as Nakba (the Catastrophe).

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watched the unfolding battle from the surrounding hills, howling with anxiety each time a demonstrator was hit.

It was the bloodiest day in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 1996, when clashes took 61 Palestinian and 15 Israeli lives.

US efforts to restart direct peace talks continued last week in Washington, where the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, met the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. There was "no breakthrough", the US state department said.

The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, had surprise talks with Mrs Albright in London on Monday. After meeting the British prime minister, Tony Blair, he said "Netanyahu has not offered anything tangible through Madeleine Albright."

Lebed's win strikes chill in Kremlin

James Meek in Moscow

ALEXANDER LEBED, the former general who believes destiny has chosen him to save Russia, took his first big step towards the Kremlin this week, easily winning runoff elections for governor of the rich, strategic Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk.

It was one of the most bizarre, expensive and hard-fought campaigns in Russia's short democratic history, pitting the 48-year-old airborne forces veteran against the establishment-backed incumbent, Valery Zubov.

Final results in from 95 per cent of polling stations showed General Lebed with 57 per cent of the vote against Mr Zubov's 38 per cent.

The Lebed victory will severely alarm the political establishment and provide a secure rear base from which the general can launch an assault on the Kremlin in presidential elections in 2000. And it confirms a cardinal shift in the disaffected, anti-establishment vote away from

extreme nationalists and traditional communists towards the neo-Gaullist solutions of patriots such as Gen Lebed and the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov.

Gen Lebed — a southern Russian who has never lived in Siberia — campaigned the length and breadth of Krasnoyarsk territory to overcome the suspicions of the tough, cynical electorate.

Often stiff and awkward, sometimes aggressive with hecklers, he was more earnest than inspirational, relying on a glib stream of rhetorical one-liners to carry him through long town meetings.

Behind the general's homely style was a group of powerful backers, leading many to question just what he had promised them.

Among them was the outspoken tycoon — and now secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States — Boris Berezovsky; Vladimir Gusinsky, a media magnate; and Anatoly 'The Ox' Bykov, a banker said to be one of the largest shareholders in Krasnoyarsk's

scandal-plagued aluminium plant. At one point the former star of Zorro, the wrinkled French hardboiled Alain Delon — huge in Russia — arrived in a private jet to support his "friend" Gen Lebed.

Mr Zubov, a quiet, apolitical academic who counted on the assumed support of a far-off President Boris Yeltsin, struggled to fight back.

Last week the ageing diva of Russia's campy European scene, Alla Pugacheva, denounced grumpily into Siberia with a brief to give the incumbent some showbiz credibility. Unfortunately, she revealed that she simply adored Gen Lebed.

"Lebed is a bright star, just a wonderful person," she said. "There is too little space here for a man like him."

The general's reputation as an authoritarian, who values obedience rather than intelligence in subordinates, is both his strength and his weakness. He has yet to persuade the country's liberals that he is anything more than an ignorant, chauvinist marshall with an alarm-

ing choice of friends. The darkest cloud over him remains his alliance with Mr Yeltsin's disgraced former bodyguard, the unashamedly anti-democratic intriguer Alexander Korzhakov.

Among his supporters he is seen as a patriotic man of action, who did something to try to save the Soviet Union and Russia rather than crying foul over it. An army officer for 26 years, he has managed to defuse his Soviet tours in Afghanistan, the Caucasus and the Balkans as paragons of selfless service to the motherland by an honest soldier angrily but dutifully carrying out the orders of Politburo fools.

He won national gratitude in 1996 when, as the president's security council secretary, he extracted Russia from the unwinnable war in Chechnya. But during his time in uniform he never took the sort of political risk involving backroom wheel-dealing, alliance-forming, persuasion and playing games off against one other of which Mr Yeltsin remains the master.

monitor the 1989 Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt. Turkey has threatened to destroy the system either while it is being delivered or soon after.

Cyprus claims the system is purely for defensive purposes in the event of a Turkish attack. Privately, the ministers acknowledge the missiles were ordered to focus international attention and so help break the deadlock in the region.

President Glafkos Clerides had said he would cancel the missiles if there were progress on the Cyprus problem. Britain and the US are stepping back for operations in the Middle East, the Gulf, Africa and eastern Europe. The climate makes it ideal for training, and the US uses it as a base for its US spy jets, which

Russian radar base in Cyprus alarms West

Chris Drake in Nicosia and Richard Norton-Taylor

THE Russian \$300 million system due for delivery to Cyprus in the coming months would provide Moscow's intelligence chiefs with top-secret information on military aircraft movements in the region, including monitoring all flights in and out of Britain's base on the island at RAF Akrotiri.

Defence experts say it is this fear that is driving Western efforts to get the order cancelled, and not the ostensible argument that the missiles could trigger a war between Greece and Turkey, both Nato allies.

The reason for concern is the powerful "Tomahawk" radar which forms part of the system. With a range of 300km, it would illuminate Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

Britain has its own radar station in Cyprus on Mount Olympus, but the Russian version is superior. Britain and the United States fear Moscow will be able to collect information that is highly valuable to Russia's Middle East allies: Syria, Iran and perhaps Iraq.

A military expert said: "Satellites are fine for watching immovable objects. This Russian system will track the West's current exclusive

monitoring which keeps everything cosy between them, Turkey, Israel and their other allies in the region, including those in the Gulf."

In London, Whitehall downplayed the significance of the Russian radar system, insisting that Britain was concerned about the missiles and the impact on what one official called "the security of Cyprus and the Mediterranean area."

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Clinton pleads with unionists

John Mullin

PRESIDENT Clinton last week pleaded with undecided unionists to cast aside their doubts about the Good Friday agreement and back it wholeheartedly, as government worries increased about the gathering momentum of the No campaign ahead of this week's referendum.

New polls indicate what would be a nightmare outcome for Tony Blair's Yes vote in Northern Ireland of around 60 per cent, masking a unionist majority against the deal. Nationalists are overwhelmingly backing it.

One fifth of unionists have not made up their minds, and they hold the key to a respectable winning margin. But the vast majority of unionists are now following Tony Blair's lead. The No camp, voters on both sides of the Irish border decide on Friday.

Against this background, dissenting republican terrorists last week stepped up efforts to disrupt the campaign, but they failed in an effort to explode a car bomb outside the police station in Armagh.

A poll in the Daily Telegraph shows 61 per cent of people in Northern Ireland will vote Yes with 21 per cent of voters, including a

large number of unionists, undecided. This is echoed in a poll of young voters jointly commissioned by the Irish News and the Irish News. "Why take the risk that this moment will not present itself again for another generation?" He added: "It is a little bit of a leap of faith. But the risks of doing it are so much less than the risks of walking away."

Mr Blair repeated his assurance that Sinn Féin will be blocked from the power-sharing executive if the IRA fails to demonstrate the war is over for good.

The No lobby feels it is winning the campaign, although it admits outright victory is unlikely. Its objective is to secure a majority of unionists against the deal, which the Government fears could make the

that would mean massive investment into Northern Ireland.

Mr Clinton said that what united people in Northern Ireland was more important than what divided them. "Why take the risk that this moment will not present itself again for another generation?" He added: "It is a little bit of a leap of faith. But the risks of doing it are so much less than the risks of walking away."

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proposed institutions unworkable. It was boosted when Lord Molyneux, David Trimble's predecessor in the role of First Minister, said he was voting No. Co-opted with Mr Blair's failure to win the No group led by Jeffrey Doherty, one of six Ulster Unionist MPs opposed to the deal, it was seen as a serious blow to the Yes camp. Only four of 10 Ulster Unionist MPs backed the deal.

Meanwhile the Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, said he would try to persuade the IRA to reveal its whereabouts of Northern Ireland, "disappeared" — up to 20 people, he said, were still in the IRA, and he said the Government published a report on proposals to help bereaved and injured victims of the Troubles.

ULSTER WEEKLY

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The Week In Britain James Lewis

Veterans plan to show emperor their disrespect

NEXT WEEK'S state visit to Britain by Emperor Akihito of Japan threatens to be nail-bitingly nasty for the visitor and his hosts. The occasion is intended to reinforce relations between the two nations, but there are still many who refuse to forget or forgive the Japanese treatment of British prisoners during the second world war.

Veterans of the Japanese Labour Corps, Survivors' Association are planning protests, such as turning their backs when the Emperor passes down The Mall with the Queen. She plans to honour her guest with the Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order of chivalry. In turn, she will receive the Grand Collar of the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum.

Although the Garter is in the Queen's personal gift, the exchange of honours was agreed only after talks between Buckingham Palace and the Prime Minister, who is keen to cement relations with a nation which has increased its investment in Britain by 20-fold in 20 years. The decision was not, apparently, to the liking of the Duke of Edinburgh, who was moved by protests from former Far East servicemen.

As a young first lieutenant in the Royal Navy, Prince Philip helped to transport some of the prisoners on the first leg of their journey home. The memory has stayed with him and, to mark the 50th anniversary of VJ Day in 1985, he pointedly chose to march with 5,000 members of the Burma Star Association.

But Prince Philip is clearly wrong if he expects Emperor Akihito to add anything to the recent rant about expression of apology by the Japanese prime minister. The constitution insists that the emperor should never trespass into political matters.

A £1 MILLION study, the largest ever carried out on a cancer treatment drug, has found "conclusively" that administering the drug after surgery to remove a breast tumour doubles the chance that they will not suffer a recurrence of the disease.

Tamoxifen, developed in Britain 30 years ago, is already the most successful drug in the world for the treatment of breast cancer. But research published in The Lancet suggests that it could be twice as effective if doctors were to prescribe it routinely after surgery to remove a tumour.

The drug, which costs £200 for a recommended five-year course, is not routinely given to younger women or those who have received chemotherapy. The new evidence suggests that these women would benefit enormously from the drug. The research, co-ordinated by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund at Oxford, concludes that if treated in this way, the death rate from breast cancer among women most at risk from the disease could be halved.

Washington Post, page 20

THE LANCET is a highly reputable journal whose reports of medical research are accepted without question. Its editors therefore responded indignantly to claims that its columns had been used by a "covert army of scientists" recruited by the tobacco company Philip Morris to counter unfavourable publicity about the effects of passive smoking.

The infiltration exercise, code-named Project Whitecoat, was described in a 1990 memorandum from a US law firm acting for the company, which has now released some 39,000 papers as part of a Minnesota lawsuit.

The documents, published on the Internet by a congressional committee chairman, also claimed that the company had established its own "learned society" in Geneva, which published papers suggesting that factors other than tobacco smoke might be behind lung disease.

HERIOT-WATT, a middle-ranking Edinburgh university, was accused of awarding degrees to students who may have scored as little as 15 per cent in modular examinations to try to improve its pass rate. The allegations were made in leaked internal documents suggesting that university staff lowered pass marks and "lured down" modules to allow less able students to get degrees.

A confidential 1996 memo by the then principal, Alistair MacFarlane, urged staff to take action to improve degree pass rates by 10 per cent after only 80 per cent of students completed their courses. His suggestion for giving an "instant boost" to results by altering syllabuses and assessment criteria was opposed by some lecturers, who complained that this would be unfair to conscientious students and potentially damaging to the university's reputation.



Chain gang... Teaming up to demand an end to unpayable Third World debt in Birmingham last weekend. PHOTOGRAPH: LUCAS BULLER

Call for a fair deal

Luka Harding in Birmingham

IN THE grassy courtyard of Birmingham's St Philip's Cathedral, Steve Summers was holding a sign that read "Call for a fair deal". He was part of a chain of 100 men, linked by the day from Northampton repertory theatre. Like thousands of others, he had come to Birmingham to form part of a giant human chain across the city.

"We thought the camel had a certain resonance," James Linell, his friend, explained. "You know — hot countries and debt?"

Mr Linell was wearing a large, home-made sack. "My sack represents poverty," he said. "I was in Malawi last week and I was horrified to find I got 43 kwacha to the pound — 70 per cent more than last year. I thought, do we have no mercy for these people?"

Mr Linell and Mr Summers were protesting about international debt, along with 50,000 others. There were Christian groups, bishops, babies in rucksacks, two nuns who had joined the human chain outside the Hoghead Tavern, students, pensioners and middle-aged hippies. The Indian Workers Association of Derby was there; so too was the Rev. Peter Parsons, who had paddled 27 miles in a canoe along a Birmingham canal. Even Muhammad Ali sent a fax.

The only notable transients were Tony Blair and his colleagues at the nearby GB summit. "It's quite pathetic they are not here," said Chris Russell, a demonstrator from Oxford University. "Tony Blair should be here. He should at least give the impression he is listening."

The plan to encircle Birmingham's International

Conference Centre, the venue of the summit, went ahead anyway though, in the end, the human chain was not a circle but more of a wonky parallelogram.

The crowds threaded their way for six miles along the Bull Ring, past the Cathedral Tavern and Hippodrome Theatre, and back to the Rotunda.

The demonstrators' plan was for everybody to link hands at 3pm and make a noise for two minutes. The noise went on for rather longer. A gigantic wave of sound washed its way around the city. Church bells rang, people clapped and howled. The young blue kazoo, the disabled shock rattles, and bus drivers honked their horns.

Clare Short, the International Development Secretary, said: "This demonstrates an end to the selfishness and greed of the 1980s and early 1990s." The protesters from Jubilee 2000, an umbrella organisation of church groups, trade unions and charities, agreed.

In a last-minute about-turn, Mr Blair agreed to meet a protesters' delegation. Their message to him was simple: that the GB nations should cancel the unpayable debt of the world's poorest nations by 2000. "I can assure you all leaders here fully share your concern," he said.

But later it emerged that Germany and Japan had held out against the debt cancellation plans. The GB leaders had agreed to push forward an initiative to bring 20 countries into the debt reduction process by 2000. "It's a whole lot of nothing," said Peter Fox of Cadogan. "Most people here are not interested in small-scale debt reduction. They want something more radical."

Noam Chomsky, page 18

Dome plan to reduce world debt

Ewan MacAskill

THE Government is hunkering behind the scenes, discussing with leading figures from both the churches and the arts to the Millennium Dome the concept of an ambitious multi-million pound project to reduce the world debt.

The plan is to launch million-banknote at the dome on January 2000, 24 hours after it is opened. The £1, £5 and £100 bills will be offered to the public in companies to raise at least £200 million to help with debt cancellation. The project will end at the end of December 2000 when the bills will be burnt on a giant bonfire.

The scheme, called the Debt Project, is the biggest effort yet to change the image of the debt-busting criticism of it as a vanity Disneyland exercise and linking it with a moral crusade. Mori poll showed overwhelming support for raising the millions through debt relief rather than building the dome.

The minister responsible for the dome, Peter Mandelson, is believed to support the scheme and to have sent it to other ministers for consideration. The International Development Secretary, Clare Short, is thought to back it, though some reservations about how money will be spent.

The Treasury has sent out signals. The initial reaction to the scheme was a mixed one. It was optimistic that the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will give his backing. "It is sensitive at the moment, just about to crystallise. But it goes ahead, with or without government backing."

The proposal has powerful supporters, particularly Ken Goss, vice-chairman of merchant bank Warburg Dillon Reed and an evangelical Christian. The head of the Millennium Commission, John Page, who is responsible for distributing Lottery money to the arts, also backs the scheme.

The dome would be used to promote the bonds, which would also be available in supermarkets, schools and churches. The bonds would be burnt at a statue built at Meridian Point, on Greenwich meridian.

The Liberal Democrat MP Sir Hughes, said: "The dome is a controversial and still needs the idea that Britain should be just for the millennium. Here is a chance to use the dome for something that is the most idealistic and practical of all the ideas put on the table for the millennium."

The millennium band idea came from a Baptist minister, Sir Chalkie, who founded the London-based charity, Oasis, which is set up to fund social projects for the homeless and the unemployed.

One reservation expressed by rival agencies is about how the money raised will be spent. There are strong objections to the money going directly to the creditors, whether banks or governments. But the campaigners insist: "It is a whole lot of nothing." "Most people here are not interested in small-scale debt reduction. They want something more radical."

Noam Chomsky, page 18

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 20, 1998

Britain top for single teenage mothers

Annela Giffordman

BRITAIN has the highest level of unmarried teenage motherhood in the world, a study shows. The rate is the highest according to a study which was collated from surveys in 53 developing and developed countries. It is also significantly higher than in most Third World countries.

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The report — published last week by the International Planned Parenthood Federation — concludes that adolescent women worldwide need radically improved access to sex education. It calls for contraception services to be dramatically improved and concluded that up to 80 per cent of adolescent births worldwide are unplanned.

Roni Lynagge, the IPPF's youth officer, said poverty and a lack of education and employment opportunities were behind the trend in Britain. "As a result, adolescent women have low aspirations. There is also an inconsistency in the contraceptive services and sex education available to teenagers across

the country. Sex education is not on the national curriculum, and when there are shortages this is one of the first things to go."

While conceding that Britain had a serious problem with teenage pregnancies, family planning organisations argued that the high level of unmarried teenage parents could be interpreted in a positive light.

The Brook Advisory Centre, the young persons' sex advice charity, said: "We are aware that Britain has a problem with unwanted teenage pregnancies — the most recent figures show that they rose by 11 per cent in 1996, which is very worrying. But the high level of unmarried teenage mothers suggests women

are thinking hard before they get married rather than rushing into shotgun marriages. What these figures don't show is that very often both parents' names are on the birth certificate."

Researchers also indicated that a significant percentage of adolescent girls are being coerced into having sex against their will. In the US, 40 per cent of women who had sex before 18 said they were forced into it.

Women continue to be disadvantaged in their access to education, and the length of time they spend in school has a direct correlation to their sexual behaviour. In Britain, women who have had less than 11 years of schooling use four times

more likely than those educated for longer to be married or cohabiting before they are 18.

The report argues that the world's 541 million young women aged between 10 and 19 form a crucial demographic force, soon to be the largest generation in history to make the transition from children to adults. Their childbearing behaviour will soon have a significant effect on global population.

But Ma Rosoff said the report did not paint a wholly bleak picture of their position.

"The condition of women is improving," she said. "Education is improving, and the age of marriage is increasing even in the most conservative countries. There is a general understanding that the development of a country does depend on the women's input."

Short attacks Amnesty view

Ava Brocott

CLARE SHORT, the international development secretary, attacked human rights pressure groups, including Amnesty International, for spending too much time

spending too much time on legal arrests and on the while ignoring human, cultural and economic issues. She is a characteristically forthright woman aimed at broadening the debate on human rights, she criticised the narrow focus of human rights lobby.

Comments, in an interview with the Independent, an Amnesty magazine, will see Short's charities set up to monitor radical killings and disappearances. The discourse on human rights is just about to crystallise. But it goes ahead, with or without government backing."

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Noam Chomsky, page 18

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12 OBITUARY

Voice of America

Frank Sinatra

THE CENTURY'S popular music is too vast to be embodied by one man, but Frank Sinatra, who has died aged 82, probably contained more of it than any other single figure. He was the first teenage idol, and the last of a line. He preceded Elvis and the Beatles, yet outlasted them. He began with Bing, and ended with Bonzo.

He bequeathed us definitive versions of some of the century's greatest songs: "What's New", "Angel Eyes", "I've Got You Under My Skin", "You Go To My Heart", "Laura", "My One and Only Love", "My Funny Valentine" and a hundred others.

He was born in Hoboken, a small New Jersey port. Both his parents had been brought to the United States from Italy as children.

Francis Albert Sinatra left school at 16. Under the spell of Bing Crosby, he was singing in local clubs at the age of 17. In 1935 he became one of a vocal quartet which went on national tour. Then for two years he hustled, singing in neighbourhood social clubs and pestering music publishers, until in 1938 he auditioned for a job at the Rustic Cabin, a roadside inn in Atlantic, New Jersey. For \$15 a week he sang and waited on tables between performance, the bonus being a nightly radio broadcast to New York.

The trumpeter Harry James heard the show and "discovered" the singer for himself. "He'd sung only eight bars when I felt the hairs on my neck rising," James recalled. That night he offered Sinatra \$75 a week to join his new band. In the same month that he joined the James orchestra Sinatra married Nancy Barbato.

Early in 1940, Tommy Dorsey made a bid for the singer's services. Dorsey's trombone playing had been one of the principal influences on Sinatra's vocal style.

He was with Dorsey from 1940 to 1942, earning \$150 a week. His first hit, "I'll Never Smile Again", was with the band, and thanks to exposure to radio and dance-hall audiences, and to his first feature film, the musicals Las Vegas Nights and Ship Ahoy, he was soon topping the polls in the music trade papers.

His efforts to enlist in the armed services after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 were thwarted by his punctured eardrum. But throughout the war he did what he could as a non-combatant, notably making efforts to publicise Nazi crimes against the Jews.

There are many colourful accounts of the circumstances of his solo career's debut. One of them formed the basis of an episode in Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather*, but according to the singer's own testimony it was not his Sicilian friends but his civilian lawyers who persuaded Dorsey to accept a settlement of \$75,000.

titled to an irreducible sobriquet: the Voice.

Within the space of a month, according to his daughter Nancy, his income rocketed from \$750 to \$25,000 a week; not long afterwards he moved from New Jersey to a house on Lake Tahoe in southern California, with a 100-high fence to keep his fans at bay.

He was making some wonderful records. His own explanation for his popularity is probably the most acute: "It was the war years, and there was a great loneliness. I was the boy in every corner drugstore, the boy who'd gone off to war." Ella Fitzgerald captured the essence of his ability to get beneath the superficial design of a song: "It's always been just this little guy telling this story."

His movie career advanced in 1945 when he co-starred with Gene Kelly in *Anchors Aweigh* and appeared in *The House I Live In*, which carried a civil rights message. But in the aftermath of the war, when the shrinking economy was putting an end to the swing era, a slow decline began. The California state senate committee on un-American activities accused him of having "followed or appeared some of the Communist party line over a long period of time."

A columnist, probably tipped off by a government agency, revealed that he had been seen socialising with the mobster Lucky Luciano in Havana during a convention of the Mafia's "cap di tutti capi". His abrasive response to these and other allegations antagonised many gossip columnists. "That hurt more was that his vocal approach had been supplanted in the affections of teenage audiences by the likes of Frankie Laine and Johnnie Ray.

His personal life, too, had slipped into moonings. There were affairs with actresses and singers, including Lana Turner. He was dancing with her one night in 1947 at a club in Palm Springs, California, when he met Ava Gardner, who was in the arms of the tycoon Howard Hughes.

Two years later Sinatra and Gardner began an affair which culminated in their marriage in Philadelphia in November 1951, a week after his divorce from Nancy had been finalised. By the time they married, Gardner was already the biggest star of the two. This led to rows. The arranger Nelson Riddle said years later: "She was the greatest love of his life, and he lost her."

When they separated in 1953, his fortunes were at a nadir. His Columbia deal was over, and so, apparently, was his movie career. He signed with a new label, Capitol Records, on terms which clearly indicated the company's lack of confidence: this was a mere one-year contract, with no advance payment against future royalties.

He wanted to play the lead in *On the Waterfront*, but was beaten by Brando. So he pleaded with Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia Pictures, to give him the part of Angelo Maggio in *Fred Zinneman's* *Here's to Eternity*. The result was a



Frank Sinatra... a giant of American popular music

best supporting actor Oscar in 1954, and a renewed career. His boyishness had gone. The figure slumped on a bar counter or leaning against a lamp-post on the covers of his new Capitol LPs was clearly a mature man. Wearing his new wardrobe of dark, single-breasted suits, white shirts and snap-brim hats, he was in tune with an audience of young adults who were enjoying the prosperity of the Eisenhower era.

Between 1953 and 1960, he created a sequence of albums which remain definitive statements of 20th century American song. Songs for *Swingin' Lovers* and *In the Wee Small Hours* were followed in 1958 by *Only the Lonely*, an astonishingly complex and assured meditation on emotional loss.

In Hollywood Sinatra broadened his range by playing a heroin addict in *The Man With the Golden Arm* in 1955, followed by the successful musicals *Guys and Dolls* (also 1955), *High Society* (1956) and *Pail Joy* (1957), and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962). Thereafter, disappointingly, his filmography consisted of little more than action and adventure films.

He romanced Kim Novak, Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall, Shirley Maclaine, Dorothy Provine, Jill St John, the heiress Gloria Vanderbilt, the dancer Juliet Prowse and many others.

He also gathered around him a group of male friends who became known as the Rat Pack — the singer Dean Martin, the entertainer Sammy Davis Jr, the actor Peter Lawford, and the comedian Joey Bishop.

At the dawn of the 1960s he left Capitol to form his own label, Reprise Records, in partnership with Warner Brothers. By this time he was rich, earning around \$4 million a year, and powerful, with links to a variety of worlds, notably John F Kennedy's Camelot.

But his relationship with the White House cooled under the influence of Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney General, who was conducting a

war on organised crime and felt that Sinatra's links with the gambling world could damage the administration.

In 1963 Sinatra's licence to operate the Cal-Nev-Lodges, his \$4 million casino hotel at Lake Tahoe, was taken away after the Nevada Gaming Commission uncovered his relationship with Sam Giancana, a Chicago mafia boss. The singer, the mobster and the president were said to have shared a mistress, Judith Campbell Exner. That was as close as anyone ever got to putting the finger on Sinatra's rumoured Mob connections.

The advent of the Beatles aged a lot of singers overnight. Sinatra responded with a bout of introspection, the 1965 album, *September of My Years*. Yet only a few months later he married a 19-year-old actress, Mia Farrow, and demonstrated his continuing artistic vitality by winning Grammy awards — the US music industry's Oscars. And at the end of the 1960s he had an even greater success with *"My Way"*.

In March 1971 he announced his retirement. But no one was very surprised when he revoked his decision two years later. The remainder of his career gradually assumed the air of a 20-year farewell tour.

Politically he had long since transferred his allegiance to the Republican presidential of Nixon, Bush and his friend Reagan.

He remained on good terms with his former wives, particularly Nancy, the mother of his children, and was successfully married for a fourth and last time in 1976 to Barbara Marx, the former wife of Zippo Marx.

The celebration of his 80th birthday had as its highlight an internationally televised party at which he was serenaded by the surviving giants of American popular music. The guest of honour chose not to sing. His work was done.

Richard Williams

Frank Sinatra, singer, actor; born December 12, 1915; died May 14, 1998

Fleet Street's Citizen Kane

Hugh Cudlipp

HUGH CUDLIPO did not invent tabloid newspapers, but they might well have been invented for him to preside over. His death at the age of 84 ends the direct lineage from Northcliffe's *4d Daily Mail* at the heart of the century to the *Daily Mirror* which, at its peak, had a circulation of more than five million.

The Cudlipp name has been central to Fleet Street romanticism. Hugh was 24 when he became editor of the *Sunday Pictorial* (now *Sunday Mirror*) in 1937 and, even more remarkably, at one stage he and his brothers, Percy and Reg, were effectively editors of different papers at the same time.

His genius was an extraordinary ability to translate the feelings, beliefs, prejudices, romantic aspirations and political dreams of the post-war masses into a common currency. The *Mirror* was a national institution just as much as the *Mercury Times*, and the force of simplicity of its language was a effect, the national idiom rose to new heights of clarity and directness.

Yet Baron Cudlipp of Aldingbourne (in West Sussex) was given a life peerage by Harold Wilson in 1974 — was never formally editor of the *Mirror*, though no editor under his charge as editor-director or chairman had any illusions about his power. I knew of no one in my journalistic life who was more inventive, quick-witted and creative of a unique approach to a story than Cudlipp. That was integrated with his genius, the tabloid genius of the century.

Hugh Knazman Cudlipp was born in Cardiff. He left school at 14 and joined the *Penarth News*, then the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* and, in 1933, the *Mirror* as assistant features editor. He soon caught the eye of a young director of the group, Northcliffe's nephew, Cecil King. There was to be a fascinating, immensely creative and successful relationship. Cudlipp spent most of the rest of his working life with the *Mirror* newspapers.

It was when he was chairman that he made probably his most serious error of judgement. He allowed Rupert Murdoch to buy the *Sun*. The immediate effect was to inject a competitive jump atmosphere into the tabloid market from which he and the *Mirror* had never recovered.

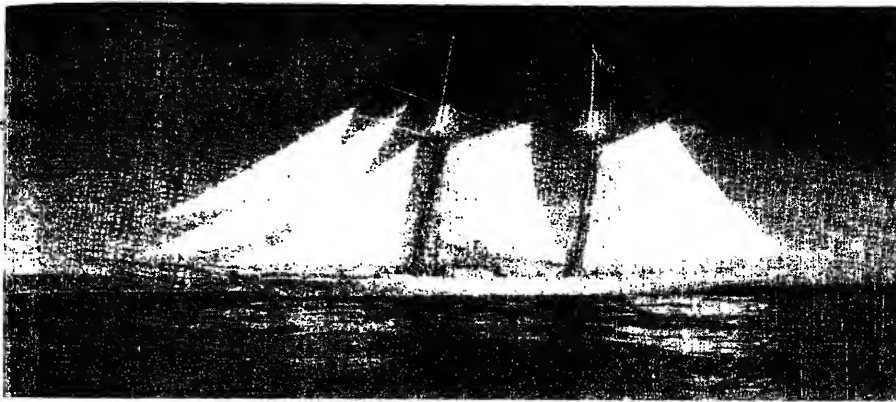
It is quite possible that the *Mirror* had passed and Cudlipp instinctively felt this. He retired at 80 and for the last few years of his life fought cancer with the courage and light-heartedness that his friends and misadventures that his friends and colleagues knew so well.

In 1945 Cudlipp married Eileen Acron, a journalist who died in 1962. A year later, he married Jodi Hyland, editor of women's magazine, who survives him. He had no children.

Geoffrey Goodman

Lord Cudlipp of Aldingbourne, journalist, born August 28, 1913; died May 17, 1998

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Summit for nothing

THE annual meetings of the industrialised nations are part of a rudimentary system of governance for the planet. They allow the countries with the most money and economic capacity to try to reconcile interests — among themselves and between themselves and poorer countries — to co-ordinate policies at times of crisis, and, not least, to create a common rhetoric to project their agreements and to cover their differences. But the world is not an easy place to manage, as the G8 leaders were no doubt reflecting even as they issued their communiqués in Birmingham last weekend. The agenda was clear enough before the Indonesian demonstrations threatened President Suharto's position and before the Indians tested their bombs.

Both the social explosions and the nuclear explosions can be seen as the result of a failure of the world's powerful countries to do what they should have done years ago. They should have called for reforms in Indonesia, which the G8 now rather shamelessly recommend, when Suharto was strong — not now, when he is weak and no longer of any use to his previous friends, who include most of the countries represented in Birmingham. The nuclear powers among them should have moved more rapidly on nuclear disarmament so that countries such as India would have less reason, or argument, for becoming nuclear weapons states. As it is, there is not much they can immediately do about either crisis. Indonesia will find its own way out of the Suharto era, and any reforms that matter will be for a new government to initiate.

In South Asia, whether the Pakistanis can be persuaded not to test a bomb and the Indians to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty depends on the skill with which the United States and China handle the situation. Immediate collective sanctions against India, which it would have been possible to adopt at Birmingham, would certainly have been counter-productive. Sadly, the Pakistanis, who knew full well that such sanctions were not on the cards, will almost certainly use their absence to justify testing. What is true of India and Indonesia — that preventive action was not taken — is true also of Asia's more general economic troubles. World financial institutions implicitly admit that the welfare borrowing and investment that led to the Asian economic crisis need not have happened when they talk now of measures to make sure it does not happen again.

The most important decisions are those that head off future crises rather than deal with one when it is upon us. That is why the G8 decision on debt relief is so disappointing. It should at least have matched the Mauritius Mandate in the aspiration to extend relief now to two-thirds of poor countries. Instead, it puts the emphasis on what poor countries have to do to earn debt relief, in fuzzy on help for post-conflict states, and commits members of the G8 to no particular target. This argument is not over, but the G8 has missed an opportunity, at a time when Indonesia and India underline the principle that the most important quality in international politics is foresight.

The end nears for Suharto

AN ECONOMIC crisis marked by price riots, student demonstrations, and attacks on Chinese merchants, later followed by a terrible massacre of alleged communists, formed the chaotic background to President Suharto's rise to power in Indonesia more than 30 years ago. It would be ironic if a new economic crisis were to be the catalyst for his fall. Indonesia could find itself in the cycle that brought down the Shah and his government in Iran. There, alternating efforts at suppression and liberalisation were equally unsuccessful, while the death and funeral of demonstrators kept on re-creating the situation whenever it showed signs of quietening.

In Indonesia, as in Iran, the position of the army will be critical. At some point, if the protests continue and if rioters are faced with the possibility of shooting their comrades, they will begin to question whether a few more years for Suharto is worth that kind of price. The differences with Iran are also great. An Islamist regime of the kind which took over in Tehran is not in sight. In Iran

the armed forces were hunted to one side after the revolution, while in Indonesia, the likelihood is that the army will retain its powerful position.

The Suharto regime belongs historically with the military regimes of Thailand, South Korea and the Marcos regime in the Philippines, all products of the cold war. Their inefficiency, corruption, repressive actions, and lack of understanding of how the societies over which they ruled had changed, led to their collapse. They are all now replaced by governments better and more democratic, if still far from ideal.

The United States, Britain, and some other Western countries have urged reform on Suharto. It is unlikely that reform can save him. His history is to arrange his own exit in a way that helps his country and does not plunge it into violence or new problems. He asked Indonesians recently to put off all thought of reform for five years. But the argument over the succession has already begun. What is most important is that Indonesians do not stumble into their next 30 years in as bloody and ill-considered a way as they did into their past three decades. Some of the protests have taken the same racist form as they did during that crisis, with attacks on Chinese shopkeepers. Some protesters may have been staged by the army in order to put pressure on the IMF to soften the measures it was urging on Indonesia. Within the armed forces officers with dubious ambitions are jostling, while among opposition politicians there is ambition and inexperience. Suharto is almost certainly on his way out, but that is less important than who and what comes in his place.

Northern Ireland is hesitating

ALL THOSE who want peace in Northern Ireland have reason to feel a spasm of panic. An opinion poll in the Irish Times last week confirmed what had until now been just a hunch: that unilateral support for the Good Friday agreement is slipping away at an alarming rate. The paper found that 45 per cent of the Unionist population in Northern Ireland's referendum — rising to 55 per cent when undecideds are excluded. Hostility to the accord among Northern Ireland's Protestants has almost doubled in the past month, while internal polls suggest previous "don't know" now favour No over Yes at a rate of at least two to one.

This does not mean the referendum will be defeated. The survey shows the accord winning the overall backing of 55 per cent of the Unionist population — helped along by a recent surge of support among Catholic voters, now at the rock solid level of 87 per cent. There is a worrying trend here: nationalist approval for the Stormont deal is rising just as unionist support is plummeting. It is possible the referendum could pass with a majority of Catholic votes but a minority of Protestant ones. That would be a technical victory, but a political defeat. The entire point of the peace process has been to find a solution acceptable to both traditions of Northern Ireland.

The sudden outbreak of cold feet among unionists is not mysterious — and it is related to the rise in Catholic support. As the ultra-rightist, anti-semitic David Byrne says, Northern Ireland politics can be a zero-sum game: "If it's good for them, it must be bad for us."

Take the ecstatic reception granted to the Balcombe Street gang at Sinn Féin's special conference on May 10. The ovation for these convicted IRA terrorists chilled many a unionist heart. Fears are rising of the gang pushed as many as 10 per cent of the unionist community from Yes to No. The fact that their appearance had been made possible by the British and Irish governments emboldened the fear that the Good Friday agreement amounts to little more than an appeasement of terrorism.

The unity of Ian Paisley's No campaign and the division within the Ulster Unionist party have also had an effect. The Unionist leadership may now be paying the price for a failure to prepare its constituency earlier for an historic compromise. F.W. de Klerk in South Africa and Yitzhak Rabin in Israel both told their peoples that the time had come to give up what had once been dear, to make a sacrifice for the sake of peace. But David Trimble and others have instead sought to cast the Stormont deal as a chance to maintain the status quo.

Ultimately, it is a choice for Northern Ireland's unionists. It could not be plainer: the choice is war or peace.

Long, shameful road from Los Alamos

Martin Woolcott

MODERN Asia begins with the Bomb. Japan's war brought down the Western empire, while the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the climax of the effort, which brought down Japan. The Asia we know was born of this double defeat. The phenomenon of atomic power, in its military and peaceful forms, immediately captured the attention of men like Jawaharlal Nehru, who helped set up a nuclear research committee as early as 1946. Mao Zedong, whose party and army were for years to wrestle with the problem of American and Russian nuclear might, and Kim Il-sung, who was to face the possibility that the American nuclear bomb might be used there, also turned to nuclear power.

The bomb's shock wave reached youngsters like Suharto, then a lieutenant in the Japanese-trained Indonesian defence forces, sending him rushing back to headquarters to confer with other officers on the future — a moment that could be seen as the beginning of the career that later brought him to power in Jakarta. Among his other avowed effects, it propelled the writer Laurence van der Post out of his prisoner-of-war camp in Java. He later noted that the savagery of the war, culminating in the final nuclear atrocity, should have created a psychological opportunity for reconciliation between Westerners and Asians, and between Asians themselves.

If there ever was such an opportunity, it was missed, with the Western powers soon exerting themselves to resume control. That was a process which evolved into the struggle between communist and non-communist Asians, and, after Vietnam, into a more complex situation in which the United States and China enjoyed a degree of rapprochement, with the Soviet Union at the other corner of the triangle. Among the countries divided by the first phase of this struggle was Indonesia, where Suharto, now a general, emerged as the country's leader after the suppression of the communist movement and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people.

The Asian struggle also brought fighting to Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos and parts of Thailand, split Korea and Vietnam, set India against China and the 1967 war, and contributed to three bouts of Indo-Pakistani hostilities. And over most of these theatres loomed the bomb, which General Douglas MacArthur wanted to drop on the North Koreans and which the French wanted the Americans to drop on the Vietnamese. On the broader canvas, the two great Asian shorts — the Indian bombs and the Indonesian chaos — grew out of the same dangerous past, deriving from the two phases of confrontation that followed the Japanese defeat.

Stability is such a favoured word in Asia that it is easy to forget how little there has been of it. Without these confrontations, especially after the Sino-American rapprochement, India would not be so preoccupied with achieving a nuclear balance with China. What these

never have come to power, as it had, might have stepped down at much earlier stage — in 1978, for instance, when students and many others called for his departure as vigorously as they are doing now.

In any, the first phase set him up, and the second, after Vietnam, tended to pull him down. The scholar of nations, Benedict Anderson, in an illuminating recent article in the *London Review of Books*, shows how the development of Southeast Asia was shaped by massive US war-making and intervention. Intensive Japanese economic activity, an inward-looking China, and the emerging effect of the Chinese diaspora. All these factors have changed. US interventionism and Japan's economic dynamism have diminished. China, as the American-looking 23rd-century nation, cannot avoid underwriting the Southeast Asian economies, even if it resists devaluation. Finally, the overseas Chinese entrepreneurs have been drawn, in Indonesia especially, into an alliance with the political elite whose disadvantages are now obvious for both sides. These changes would have undone the Asian "miracle" in Southeast Asia last year, even without the debt crisis of last year. Now they particularly threaten Indonesia, the only remaining uncorrupted regime in the world wars.

THE Asian miracle was one of the great strategic changes in the world since 1945. So is India's policy of nuclear restraint. The same shift in US priorities that undercut the tough on communism line also isolated India. The relationship between China and the US, and between both countries and Pakistan, put India in a difficult position. The US has made and is making, efforts to persuade China to cease nuclear and missile aid and trade to Pakistan and Iran. But New Delhi still sees India as the only country with nuclear capacity that was not receiving technical help from an outside power. Previous governments came close to testing. Then came the arrival to power of the Bharatiya Janata party, with its strong nuclear rhetoric. And in Indian scientists and soldiers went down what was their most shameful road.

Those men on the spot who do not experience the same moral dilemma as triumph and success felt by the man who first exploded a nuclear bomb. Elated by what they had achieved, they were also fearful of it. Robert Oppenheimer, the chief scientist of the second world war nuclear effort, famously said quotations from the Bhagavad-Gita to express his feelings about the first bomb: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

The other was "The good deed of man has done before the deed of the devil." India would prefer the latter. Though, appealing to their last week's decision, which they are not seeing in the narrow frame of national security. What they do not yet see is that the present emergency in Asia spring out of a century in which war, nuclear and political, economic, growth, and political choices were dangerously intermingled, as they still are today.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 24 1998

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The poor always pay debts of the rich

Noam Chomsky on the one-sided history of debt 'forgiveness'

THE CURRENT call for international debt cancellation is welcome, but debt does not just go away. Someone pays, and history generally confirms what a national bank at the structure of power would suggest: risks tend to be socialised, just as costs commonly are.

The old-fashioned idea is that responsibility falls upon those who borrow and lend. Money was not borrowed by companies, assembly workers, or slum-dwellers. The mass of the population gained little from borrowing, indeed often suffered grievously from its effects. But they are the ones who bear the burden of repayment, along with taxpayers in the West — not the banks who made the loans or the economic and military elites who enriched themselves while transferring wealth abroad and taking over the resources of their own countries.

The Latin American debt that reached crisis levels from 1983 onwards has been sharply reduced by the return of "light capital" — in some cases, overcompensation, though all figures are dubious for these secret and often illegal operations. The World Bank estimated that Venezuela's light capital exceeded its foreign debt by 40 per cent in 1987. In 1980-82, the light capital reached 20 per cent of borrowing for eight leading debtors, according to estimates. That is a regular pre-collapse phenomenon, which we saw again in Mexico in 1994.

The current International Monetary Fund "rescue package" for Indonesia approximates the estimated wealth of the Suharto family. One Indonesian economist estimates that 80 per cent of the country's foreign debt of some \$80 billion is owed by 50 individuals, not the 200 million who end up suffering the costs.

Debt can be and has in the past been cancelled. When Britain, France and Italy defaulted on debts to the United States in the 1930s, Washington "forgave or forgot" as *Wall Street Journal* reported. When the US took over Cuba 10 years ago it cancelled Cuba's debt to Spain on the grounds that the burden was "imposed upon the people of Cuba without their consent and by force of arms". Such debts were later called "odious debt" by legal scholars, "not an obligation for the nation" but "the debt of the power that has incurred it", while the creditors who "have committed a hostile act with regard to the people" can expect no payment from the victims.

When Britain challenged Costa Rica's attempts to cancel the debt of former dictator to the Royal Bank of Canada, the arbitrator — William Howard Taft — concluded that the Bank lent the money for no payment must fail. The logic extends readily to much of today's debt.

In the 1970s, the World Bank promoted borrowing "There was no general problem of developing countries being able to service debt," the Bank announced authoritatively in 1978.

When Mexico defaulted in 1982 a joint publication of the IMF and the World Bank declared that "There is still considerable scope for

sustained additional borrowing to increase productive capacity". The record continues to the present. Mexico was hailed as a free market triumph and a model for others until its economy collapsed in December 1994, with tragic consequences for most Mexicans.

Shortly before the Asian financial crisis erupted in 1997, the World Bank and IMF praised the "sound macroeconomic policies" and enviable fiscal record of Thailand and South Korea.

A 1997 World Bank report singled out the "particularly intense" progress of the "most dynamic emerging" markets, namely Korea, Malaysia, and Thai-

land, with Indonesia and the Philippines not far behind. The report appeared as the fairy tales collapsed.

Failure of prediction is no sin, but it is hard to overlook the argument that economist Paul Krugman put "Bad ideas flourish because they are in the interest of powerful groups."

Over the centuries, free market theory has been double-edged: market discipline is just fine for the poor and defenceless, but the rich and powerful take shelter under the wings of the many state.

Another factor in the debt crisis was the liberalisation of financial flows from the early 1970s. The post-war Bretton Woods system, designed by the US and UK to liber-

alise trade while regulating capital movements, was dismantled by the Nixon administration. This was a major factor in the enormous explosion of capital flows in the years that followed. In 1970, 90 per cent of transactions were related to trade and long-term investment, the rest were speculative. By 1995 it was estimated that 95 per cent of transactions were speculative, most of them very short-term (90 per cent with a return time of a week or less).

Markets have become more volatile, with more frequent crises. For the past 25 years, growth and productivity rates have declined significantly. In the US, wages and income have stagnated or declined

for the majority while the top few per cent have gained enormously. By now the US has the worst record among the industrial countries by standard social indicators. England follows closely, and similar though less extreme effects can be found throughout the OECD.

The effects have been far more grim in the Third World. Comparison of East Asia with Latin America is illuminating. Latin America has the world's worst record for inequality. East Asia ranks among the best.

Debt is a social and ideological construct, not a simple economic fact. Furthermore, liberalisation of capital flows serves as a powerful weapon against social justice and democracy. Recent policy decisions are choices by the powerful, based on perceived self-interest, not mysterious economic laws.

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G8 fiddles while Jakarta burns

OPINION
Larry Elliott

ANYBODY who wants to know why the Bank of England may yet put up interest rates should have been in Birmingham last weekend. The strong pound may be hurting the factories in the metal-bashing capital of Britain, but the bars and restaurants of the city centre are booming.

This (dull) — between the strong and the weak, between what you see and what you don't — is by no means confined to Britain. Take the whole G8 process, for example. The oblique visual image of the weekend was of Bill Clinton sitting on the balcony of a canal-side pub sipping a pint of Greenall's bitter.

Nothing so memorable came out of the summit itself, which was the usual round of windy rhetoric, pre-cooked fudge and unspoken disagreements.

Had he been pressed by his fellow drinkers in the Malt House, Mr Clinton would no doubt have said that the world economy is robust. Again, he would have been half right. His own country is enjoying an industrial renaissance, while faster growth in the European economy is at last starting to make a dent — albeit small — in unemployment. Britain, on an optimistic assessment, has found the magic elixir of non-inflationary growth. Free-market reforms will do the trick for Russia, and Japan's recession will end once the impact of the latest fiscal boost kicks in.

But there is another way of looking at the current state of the world. Instead of taking the G8 — the West's most powerful economies — let's look at the 75 — the world's most populous nations.

Starting in reverse order, we have Indonesia, a country of 200 million which is apparently about to go up in flames. Economic collapse in Indonesia could push the fragile Japanese banking system — heavily exposed there — over the brink. And, if the crisis continues to have an ethnic dimension, with pogroms against ethnic Chinese, can the West expect Beijing to stand idly by? It is not hard to see why the West feels slightly uneasy about what is happening in Indonesia. President Suharto has been in power more than 30 years, yet only

now has the G8 decided he is actually a bit of a cad — too late for the people of East Timor, killed with weapons sold by the West.

Then there is Russia, the subject of an experiment in shock-treatment free-market economics over the past 10 years. Normally, scientists testing new drugs try them out on small, carefully-selected samples; they would be wary of turning a fully-fledged nuclear power led by an ailing drunk into a laboratory mice. The result is a Third World economy with the mafia in charge.

The United States, the third most-populous country is doing better. Even its detractors would have to agree it has a First World economy. They would add, however, that this is poised precariously on a Third World society.

Then we come to the Big Two. Nuclear proliferation in the Indian sub-continent seems unlikely to add to the stability of the global system. But India believes it is right — that its voice is not being heard in such forums as the World Trade Organisation where, despite all the free-trade talk, mercantilist interests are still at work between Washington and Brussels, then presented to other countries as a *fait accompli*.

We shall see whether WTO ministers pay any more respect to the delegation from New Delhi now.

Finally, of course, there is China, which has realised a devaluation that would send tremors through the rest of Asia. But it is not able to do so for much longer. When you are a dictatorship governing more than a billion people, it might be better to put some living standards that export-led growth can bring to quell demands for greater political freedom.

China is facing intense competition from those neighbouring countries which have seen their currencies depreciate by 50 per cent or more. It is poised on the brink of a devaluation that could send shudders across Asia and beyond.

The global economy is at a crossroads. The world may be on the verge of rising up to match that of the post-war golden era, with the full application of new technology leading to higher growth and increasing competition keeping in check the inflationary pressures that could be on the brink of something much nastier: a full-scale global economic crash, triggered by Asia.



Asian crisis... A policeman hits a looter in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, with the butt of his rifle.

Some will say a financial meltdown would be no bad thing. Devotees of Joseph Schumpeter's waves of creative destruction would argue that out of the ashes will emerge a better global economic system, just as there would have been no golden age without the Depression, Hitler and the second world war.

Prevention being better than cure, it might be better to put some reforms in place now. But is this likely?

The G8 can see the point of intervening against international drug smugglers and to prevent illegal immigration. Some of its more progressive members can see the point of intervening in the labour market to subsidise jobs still others can see the point of intervening to reduce the burden of debt for the poorest nations. The communarians, and their close friends the social authoritarian, can see the point in intervening to force people to behave better, but, unfortunately, as yet none of the G8 members can see any point in intervening to make capital behave better.

This is the crux of the matter. Atacking what they describe as the

In Brief

GEORGE Soros, the international financier, could make \$2 billion from a bet on sterling falling in value, following a recent strategy that involved buying the pound close to its recent high against the German mark and then instigating a series of trades using options.

CHRIE'S, the world's largest and oldest fine art auction house, has been sold to a French businessman François Pinault for \$1.2 billion.

TOP executives at US car giant Chrysler will earn up to \$1 billion if the merger with Daimler-Benz is approved. They will be able to use their options to buy shares in the merged group almost immediately, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

MEMBERS of Britain's Royal Automobile Club may vote legal action to force the motor organisation to extend its windfall payouts to overseas subscribers. The move follows the RAC's decision to sell its weekend and driving school operations for \$730 million.

THE US Justice Department set out to block the \$1.1 billion merger between Primestar, a television consortium, and Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster. The suit alleged the transaction would allow five of the largest cable companies to protect their legal monopolies.

ABBIDING war has broken world's largest record company, with front-runner Sengren, the drinks and entertainment group, ranged against two US leveraged buy-out funds.

PEARSON, a diversified British media and entertainment company, was a bidding contest for Simon & Schuster's educational and reference publishing division. The deal, the largest yet in the book business, Pearson shares immediately shot up by 9 per cent.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Monday May 18	Tuesday May 19
Australia	2.0088-2.0157	2.0092-2.0108
Canada	20.40-20.42	20.37-20.38
Belgium	85.85-86.04	85.72-85.80
Denmark	2.2542-2.2565	2.2551-2.2562
France	11.04-11.05	11.03-11.04
Germany	9.224-9.230	9.202-9.210
Italy	2.084-2.087	2.080-2.085
Japan	12.88-12.87	12.88-12.88
Netherlands	1.180-1.1805	1.1801-1.1802
Spain	166.88-166.92	166.88-166.90
Sweden	2.225-2.226	2.225-2.226
Switzerland	3.0428-3.0435	3.0432-3.0435
UK	2.07-2.071	2.07-2.071
US dollar	2.413-2.415	2.413-2.415
Yen	12.18-12.20	12.18-12.20
Portugal	246.31-246.51	246.31-246.51
South Africa	12.18-12.20	12.18-12.20
South Korea	2.118-2.117	2.118-2.117
SEK	1.471-1.473	1.472-1.473

Source: Reuters. Data as of 10.00 a.m. on May 18. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency against 1 British pound.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 24 1995

Uzbekistan makes up with the Kremlin

Sophia Bihab in Moscow

ONLY last year the president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov (one of six Muslim heads of state in the former Soviet republics), was busily setting himself up as a champion of resistance against "Russian imperialism" in Central Asia and coddling up to Yeltsin.

But Karimov — a former party apparatchik who once remarked that "democracy, like communism, is nothing but a myth" — has been forced by Uzbekistan's domestic and regional problems to adopt a more conciliatory approach towards the Kremlin.

A turning point has been reached in our relations," Karimov declared on his return from Moscow on May 8. During his trip, he waded so enthusiastically about Uzbekistan's "old relationship of co-operation" with the Kremlin that he presented the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, to announce the creation of a new troika within the independent Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The troika, which comes in the name of the Russian-Belarus "union", the four-nation customs union of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and the "new Russia" of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (Gruam), is made up of Russia, Uzbekistan and its western little neighbour, Tajikistan.

Karimov said it would "oppose the fundamentalism backed by lead to the Uzbek border in 1997 and the continued fighting in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Karimov realised the only country that would spring to his aid was Russia. The Western powers — and particularly the United States — have for years perched in making their offers of help conditional on a greater degree of democracy.



President Islam Karimov... forced to seek Russian help

In other words, the Russian president promised his opposite number that he would help him out if "Islamists" — whether Uzbek, Tajik or Afghan — were to threaten his regime.

With the advance of the Taliban to the Uzbek border in 1997 and the continued fighting in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Karimov realised the only country that would spring to his aid was Russia. The Western powers — and particularly the United States — have for years perched in making their offers of help conditional on a greater degree of democracy.

In a now familiar sequence of events, when Karimov "eradicated" Uzbekistan's secular opposition of democrats and nationalists, he gave free rein to the more popular Islamist opposition. This has always proved difficult to counter in rural areas, particularly in the overpopulated valley of Fergana.

But Gernem's lecture was in vain. 10 days later, Karimov told the Uzbek parliament that "Muslim activists are no dangerous they need to be shot in the head. And if you don't dare, I'll do it myself." He got parliament to adopt a different version of law on religion.

He inveighed against "the civil service chiefs who spend more time building mosques than schools", and claimed that the "Wahabists" — Soviet propaganda code for Islamic opposition members — planned to poison wells, murder civil servants, sabotage factories and plunge the country into a civil war like the one that ravaged Tajikistan. Their sin, he said, was to rebuild an Islamist stronghold in the Fergana valley.

The murder of several policemen in that region last winter, which may have been politically motivated but could just as easily have been the work of local mafias, triggered a wave of fresh arrests and the "disappearance" of prominent Islamist activists.

Like many Uzbeks, Karimov fears the possible consequences of a "peace process" that got under way last summer in Tajikistan without his backing. There is nothing irreversible about the process: the bringing into the political fold of armed opposition

Gernem also made the point that many governments dealing with Islamist terrorism have merely aggravated the problem by resorting to purely repressive policies.

France cracks down on Corsican patronage

EDITORIAL

THE French tax inspectorate's recent report on Corsica's leading bank, Crédit Agricole, represents a milestone in the history of Corsica. It is the first tangible proof that the government has changed its approach to the Corsican problem. Until recently, the attitude that applied to the island was that it constituted an exception. To the degree, all French governments have acted as if Corsica alone, instead of giving the republic and required special treatment that somehow dispensed from having to obey the rule of law.

There is nothing wrong with the principle of that attitude: the Commission accepts that islands merit a special status. But in Corsica's case, the island's economic and social situation is also the question of its political future. Excessive movement of the island's population has been a major factor in its economic decline. The past in such a way as to give "confidential" France that it is not enough merely to restore the state's self-respect and re-establish the rules of normal public life: the government must also come up with the economic package that the island needs if it is to be able to kick its bad old habits.

Yet all the cases of abuse, fraud and bending of regulations revealed by the inspectorate are of equal gravity. There is a big difference between, say, aid that is allocated to a nationalist farmer and a deliberately organised system of misappropriation. The courts, when they come to examine such cases, will have to act with discernment. It would be a mistake to go from one extreme to the other, from widespread laxity to universal suspicion: not all the aid that Corsican farmers receive is illegitimate.

Even before the prefect of Corsica, Claude Brignac, was named down in February, the government had promised it would embark on a new Corsica policy whose precondition would be a return to the rule of law. With the tax inspectorate's report, it has begun to provide itself with the teeth to do so. It has also instructed civil servants to make sure that regulations are respected in Corsica as they are elsewhere.

But it is not enough merely to restore the state's self-respect and re-establish the rules of normal public life: the government must also come up with the economic package that the island needs if it is to be able to kick its bad old habits.

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Scandinavia's itch may make Cuba sore

Anthony Browne

IDEAL Castro's plans to revive Cuba's economy are being jeopardised... by the relative stasis of the Scandinavian ways.

Last week the price of Cuba's second-biggest export, nickel, fell by 10 per cent as a delayed consequence of Sweden's decision to replace its euro coin should be replaced with an alloy called Nordic gold — produced mainly (surprise, surprise) in Scandinavia.

At the root of this tale is the advent of the euro. Community traders fear the euro market will be flooded because the switch to the new currency will leave governments around Europe with tens of thousands of tonnes of the metal.

Sweden currently contains nickel. But plans by the European Commission to use nickel for euro coins had to be abandoned after the Swedish government claimed that using the metal would bring their citizens out in a rash. After intense lobbying, the Commission agreed that the nickel in euro coins should be replaced with an alloy called Nordic gold — produced mainly (surprise, surprise) in Scandinavia.

The 11 governments which formally committed themselves to the single currency this month will need to produce more than 70 billion euro coins, using 350,000 tonnes of metal. The coins will not be in circulation until 2002, but the unprecedented scale of the operation means national mints are starting production immediately.

Coin of countries' old currencies will be recycled, but governments will be left with a huge surplus of nickel which cannot be reused.

German coin producer Vereinigte Deutsche Nickelwerke, which has set up the Euro Coin Recycling Centre, said last week that it calculated there would be up to 100,000 tonnes of surplus nickel — more than a tenth of global annual production.

Lawrence Eagles, commodities analyst at GNI, said: "That's a very high proportion of the market. This news is the straw

that broke the camel's back." The price of nickel fell sharply last week, from more than \$5,400 a tonne to less than \$5,000, its lowest level for five years. Governments have promised to try to limit any further impact on the market by releasing the recycled nickel over a long period.

The collapse of the nickel price will fall particularly hard on Cuba, which along with Russia and Canada is one of the world's leading suppliers. Cuba has been desperately trying to stave off economic collapse by building up its exports of nickel. In the first four months of this year, it sold around 45,000 tonnes, bringing in around a quarter of a billion dollars of hard currency. — The Observer

Le Monde

Uzbekistan makes up with the Kremlin

Sophia Bihab in Moscow

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LE MONDE diplomatique

Required reading for French speakers
Also in German, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Arabic...

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On the streets... Polish prostitutes in Hamburg

Prostitution takes a turn for the West

Slav women are being sexually exploited by networks and gangs, writes **Roland-Pierre Paringaux**

IN 1996, 18-year-old Irina K. came across an alluring small ad in a Kiev newspaper: an association was looking for female candidates to go on a training course in Berlin to learn interpreting, with a guaranteed job at the end of the day.

Like many Ukrainian women of her age, she had few prospects in a country where social deprivation and female unemployment have reached record levels. She also desperately needed money to support her two-year-old child, whose father had done a vanishing act, and her grandmother, who had brought her up. Irina unhesitatingly signed up.

Two days later, armed with a fake passport and dreams of an European Eldorado, she took a train with another woman who had answered the same ad. During the journey they told each other scary stories about kidnapped women. When they arrived in Berlin, the German who met them said there had been a change of plan: the interpreting school had closed down and they would have to look for work elsewhere. Luckily he knew someone in Belgium.

When they got to Brussels, he took them to a hookers' bar near the Gare du Nord. When the two Ukrainians expressed surprise, their minder did not beat about the bush: his network had taken a big risk and their journey had cost a lot. To cover his expenses, he would have to "entrust" them to bar owners in Brussels and Antwerp for a fee of \$10,000 each. It was up to them to repay their debt by prostituting themselves.

The women refused, but it was too late. The trap had suddenly closed on them: their passports had been confiscated, and for several days they were raped, beaten and threatened with reprisals.

Irina gave in. But she protested herself with such bad grace that the bar owner ended up selling her to a

Belgian pimp who operated in Rue d'Aarschot, in Brussels' red light district. The street is lined with windows behind which hundreds of prostitutes from eastern Europe, Albania, Thailand and Zaire exhibit their charms 12 hours a day and seven days a week. They are forced to hand over part of their earnings to pimps. They are often roughed up.

A police check eventually enabled Irina to escape from hell. She was arrested because she had no identity papers. A medical examination revealed cigarette burns all over her body. The police encouraged the young woman to lodge a complaint against the pimp who had tortured her and testify against the network that had exploited her.

She agreed to do so — which is rare. Kept at a secret location during investigations, she regulated her situation with the authorities. She now hopes to settle in Brussels and bring her small son there from Ukraine. She has started a training course — in interpreting.

Apart from its rather unusual happy end, Irina's story illustrates a fast-growing form of criminal activity: the sexual exploitation in western Europe of women from former Soviet-bloc countries. The business — a combination of illegal immigration, slavery, sexual exploitation and organized crime — is believed to involve several hundreds of thousands of women each year.

Like Irina, they all flee poverty and dream of a better life in the West. The collapse of communist regimes has created the conditions that make such a dream possible. Although the European Union (EU) has stiffened its immigration legislation, the demands of the sex industry have not diminished. This creates an ideal situation for traffickers and pimps, who force their victims to break the law and are thus able to obtain a hold over them.

Not all candidates are as naive as Irina. Many realise that "top model" often means call-girl, and that "waitress", "au pair", "escort girl" and "dancer" are synonyms of prostitute. What they do not expect in to be treated virtually like slaves.

Young women from eastern Europe offer many advantages and are easily placed. Often beautiful blondes, they are mostly docile and well-educated. As they come from nearby countries, they cost less to feed into the system than women from Asia or Latin America. An ordinary three-month tourist visa acts as an Open Sesame. Thousands of them have become sexual ornaments, drifting from one country to another as they obtain visas.

Statistics are unreliable, but the general trend is clear. According to the International Organisation for Migration, some 500,000 women from central and eastern Europe prostitute themselves in EU countries. In some countries they have cornered up to 75 per cent of the market within only a few years. The women concerned are getting younger and younger: some Albanian girls, who are numerous in Italy, are only 14 or 15. Their arrival on the scene has caused prices to plummet.

The prostitution networks, which are run mostly by Russians, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Turks and Albanians, generate huge profits. They cream off several thousand dollars per woman at each stage of her odyssey (passport, journey, placement).

German police say that during the three months they have a tourist visa prostitutes have to hand over about \$20,000 to middlemen. Earnings are even higher in Japan, where women from eastern Europe now compete with Thai and Filipino women, who are regarded as less exotic.

"There's a lot of talk about drugs, but it's the white slave trade that earns the biggest money for criminal groups in eastern Europe," says Michael Platzer, of the Vienna-

based United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention. Not surprisingly, Russian mafia groups have muscled in on the act.

The question of whether or not organized crime has taken over the eastern European prostitution trade is the subject of much obsessive speculation, even in France, which has so far been relatively unaffected.

Most prostitutes in France are French or from Africa or the Maghreb countries. There are no big networks. But Slav women are definitely on the march, and not just on the Champs-Élysées or the Croisette in Cannes. Last year the French police's anti-slave-trade squad sent down a gang of Bulgarians. They were all from the same village and had set up in business, with three dozen women, on Paris's circular boulevard.

In Nancy, an Albanian gang that had specialised in drugs but diversified into prostitution was caught and put away. "This is definitely the new trend," says a police officer. "It's a far cry from the old-fashioned image of the Marseillais pimp with his two or three girls."

The local Communist deputy, Le Maréchal, revealed on May 7 how the "new right" had completely taken over a series of lectures organised by the association C.O.P. (Centre for the Protection of the Foreigner).

Pierre Vidal, a member of the FN's political executive and a former head of the Greek, Yugoslav and head of the French Indo-European League in Lyon and a member of the FN's scientific council, and also identified last week as a lecturer on large on the FN's cultural agenda.

Whatever the approach adopted by individual countries, all the indications are that the exploitation of the huge reservoir of Slav women whose hopes are first raised, then shattered, is unlikely to dry up in the near future.

Right way of thinking

Christiane Chombeau

THE team led by Bruno Mégret, the powerful number two in the far-right National Front (FN), has by now had ample opportunity to demonstrate what kind of cultural policy it favours.

In offerings since it took over the town council 15 months ago have included "a Gallic day", "an Indo-European ballet" and the celebration of the centenary of the Italian fascist philosopher, Julius Evola.

Such events are totally in keeping with the philosophy of the "new right" and the Research and Study Group on European Civilisation (Grec). The Grec is a self-styled "society of thought" which has strongly influenced some sections of the far right over the past 30 years.

This school of thought, which is subscribed to by many of the deputies and colleagues of Bruno Mégret, is "official" mayor of Vitrolles, proclaims the supremacy of European civilisation — instead of talking of "Aryans", like the Nazis, it prefers to use the term "Indo-European", and draws on the "pagan" sources that inspired the SS in Germany.

The takeover has been gradual. First came the destructive phase, marked, among other things, by the sacking in July 1997 of the manager of the Lumière cinema, who had conducted a most densely packed charge of the arts and showed several short films on Adolf Hitler's sexual life.

Then came the closing-down of the music café, Le Sous-Marin, which played rather too much rock and rai music for the FN's taste. It marked a second, subliminal phase, when the town council's cultural associations such as Culture en Provence and Secre du Printemps (Rite of Spring), to organise arts events more in keeping with the FN council's ideology.

This was done discreetly. For once, the council did not call a press conference to announce its programme of events. Similarly, it did not blazon the names of those who came to Vitrolles to give public lectures. But the trained eye could detect the tenor of a cultural policy in the allusions, nudges and winks to be found all over its accompanying literature.

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 24 1998

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The Washington Post

Pakistan Caught in a Nuclear Dilemma

Steven Mufson in Islamabad

IN HER air-conditioned sitting room, with its rich carpet, carved oval side tables and fine drawings of historical scenes, Pakistan's former ambassador to the United States smoked a cigarette and talked about nuclear explosions that possess greater destructive force than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

"Pakistan doesn't have a choice," said Molekhan, arguing that Pakistan must detonate its own nuclear device to respond to last week's five nuclear tests by arch-rival India. "A nuclear challenge can only be countered by a nuclear counter-response."

That counter-response could be said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who ruled Muslim League party voters in Lahore last Sunday that Pakistan could prepare a nuclear response "in 12 to 36 hours."

For a time, it seemed as if Pakistan had already set one off. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in Birmingham, England, for the Group of 77 meeting, said that Pakistan had just conducted a nuclear test. The Pakistani government vigorously denied that report.

"It is only a matter of time," Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ghous Ayub Khan told the BBC, adding to the confusion and international concern. Khan said the cabinet had approved a nuclear test last week. But the Foreign Ministry and Sharif's office said the government is keeping its options open.

In the wake of the G-8's failure to agree on concrete measures to go along with its condemnation of India's tests and stated intention to deploy nuclear weapons, the Pakistani leader Sharif to press the nuclear test button is mounting — despite the potentially dire economic consequences of sanctions that would probably follow a Pakistani test.

"It's a very, very difficult choice," said retired Lt. Gen. Tariq Masood, formerly in charge of Pakistan's defence production industries. "It's a no-win situation either way."

India's Tests Enhance China's Reputation

John Pomfret in Beijing

THE EXPLOSION of five nuclear devices in India's forbidding Rajasthan desert has presented China for the second time in less than a year with a powerful argument to improve its international image and reputation, analysts say.

Of all the world's powers, India's long northern neighbor, which has long been a rival, has been the most likely to be pulled to the aid of India's nuclear tests. China now has the opportunity to dispel impressions that it poses a threat to the region, while proving that it is serious about its recent promises to stand against nuclear proliferation.

"China comes out a winner," said a senior Chinese official at the Chinese Academy of International Studies. "China has become an even greater winner if it is able to accept some of the responsibilities of a great power."



Pakistanis protest in Karachi against India's nuclear tests

The forces pushing Sharif to go ahead with a test include leaders of his party, virtually the entire political opposition, Muslim fundamentalists and militant students. His predecessor, Benazir Bhutto, had advocated a nuclear test, and even his own outspoken foreign minister seemed to favor one. "I wish there was another road for us, but there isn't," former ambassador Lodhi said.

Though Sharif's political alliance controls two-thirds of the seats in the parliament, the prime minister hesitates to defy popular opinion. Sharif's parliamentary majority came in an election with a low voter turnout.

Yet beneath the surface, there is still widespread disagreement among Pakistanis about key issues, such as nuclear deterrence, the role of the United States and the link between the economy and security.

When it comes to deterrence, many advocates of a Pakistani nuclear test view the Cold War as a model. Faced with a hostile neighbor with five times the territory, eight times the population, more than twice as many soldiers and

perhaps a small nuclear arsenal, many influential Pakistanis long for a nuclear standoff with India that will be tense but peaceful. Only by establishing a nuclear device as a deterrent, they argue, can Pakistan ensure mutual destruction can Pakistan guarantee its own security, say many opinion leaders here.

Yet other analysts are not certain whether a nuclear test is really needed to deter India from possible aggression. Masood, the retired officer, argues that the mere capability of performing a test is sufficient because Pakistan could always hold its test in India — above ground.

Open testing could lead to more development and deployment. "An arms race will only make things more insecure," Masood said. Unlike the Soviet Union and the United States, Pakistan and India border on one another, have a territorial dispute and often have emotional leaders. "It's a very combustible material," Masood said.

There are also mixed viewpoints concerning the fragility of Pakistan's economy and its vulnerability to international pressure. The

finances minister has noted that inflows of foreign capital are keeping Pakistan from defaulting on its international loans. Pakistan's ministry is as eager as anyone to avoid an economic setback.

Economic sanctions will hurt its ability to get educated, skilled workers, replacement parts and new equipment and technology.

At the same time, however, Pakistanis don't want to barter national security interests for commercial gains. Moreover, they say it is unfair that India, because of its laudable economy, might be better able to withstand any sanctions that are imposed for testing nuclear devices.

Finally, the role of the United States arouses divided emotions. Pakistan's leaders are upset that the United States tried to play down the danger of India's Hindu nationalist government making good on its campaign pledge to carry out new nuclear tests. Many suspected, at least initially, that the United States deliberately looked the other way when India set off its blasts.

And yet the United States is now clearly leading the campaign for sanctions against India.

Vajpayee's Day of Glory

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

SAY THIS for Atal Bihari Vajpayee: He comes right to the point. The new Indian prime minister burst onto the world stage last week by delivering a nuclear punch to the nose of the international community.

Other candidates for Polecat of the Month status were left eating dust: The carefully cultivated "more in sorrow than in anger" innocence favored by Benjamin Netanyahu, and the stiff, sluggish demeanor of Slobodan Milosevic, suddenly seemed rather less catatonicism as Prime Minister Vajpayee's day of atomic glory.

The Indian leader chose a symbolically charged moment to order his country's first nuclear test since 1974. The three experimental underground blasts were carried out on May 11, just as the leaders of the world's seven most affluent industrial democracies, joined by their poor but militarily powerful Russian cousins, were preparing to assemble in Birmingham, England, for their annual two-day parley about the state of the world.

But in a clear hint that the great powers are not so great now, Vajpayee seems to have been oblivious to the timing of their summit. He merely chose May 11 because it fell on the same Buddhist festival day as the first Indian test in 1974.

The big question he did not answer is why, or at least, why now. The answer seems to be political rather than military.

The Indian prime minister is not about to attack Pakistan or China, the two nations his government has identified as military threats. Instead, he moves to bolster his Hindu nationalist party's standing with an electorate that welcomed the tests, India's outdated pacifist image notwithstanding.

Vajpayee almost certainly calculates that becoming a declared nuclear power ultimately boosts India's chance to gain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and win entry to other international power groups. Would the G-7 have bent their rules and framework to bring Russia halfway into the nuclear club if Moscow were not the world's second greatest nuclear power? I doubt it.

Vajpayee is an inconvenient fellow in another important aspect: Atomic weapons are dangerous. He has the spread of nuclear weapons has been based to a great extent on legitimate fears that a rogue regime headed by a dictator would unleash a global crisis by actually using these things.

India is the world's largest democracy. Vajpayee is a neither rogue (in this sense) nor dictator. He is far better or worse an expression of India's collective political judgment. The same can be said for Israel's Netanyahu, who has underscored real nuclear weapons in his hip pocket.

Vajpayee's nuclear decision is shocking and reprehensible. But in delivered two needed reminders to Clinton & Colleagues at Birmingham: Power is about will, not words and illusions. And selective nonproliferation is a hard case to make.

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani
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Early Breast Cancer Drug Shows Dramatic Results

Rick Weiss

A CANCER medicine that is already approved for use against ovarian cancer and advanced breast cancer has been shown for the first time to increase survival dramatically in women with early breast cancer, researchers reported on Monday.

So substantial are the newfound benefits of the drug, called Taxol, that its use in women with early breast cancer should become routine immediately, several doctors said.

"This represents the single most significant advance in the treatment of early stage breast cancer in the past 20 years," said Richard L. Schilsky, director of the University of Chicago Cancer Research Center, speaking at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Los Angeles, where the data were presented.

By adding Taxol to the standard regimen of chemotherapy drugs, doctors could save tens of thousands of lives a year worldwide, said Schilsky, who heads the federally funded cancer research consortium that oversaw the trial at more than 100 hospitals.

"This is a very big advance and it can be put into practice right now," said Larry Norton, director of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's breast cancer in New York. "When the 19,000 cancer specialists leave this meeting," Norton said, "they are going to go home and widely use this therapy."

The Taxol findings are the latest in a spate of reports about experimental cancer therapies that have generated excitement among scientists and investors and, at the same time, warnings that patients' hopes are being unduly raised.

On Monday, researchers in Los Angeles reported that a new drug called paclitaxel appeared to substantially reduce women's odds of developing breast cancer, though they said it was too soon to say whether long-term use was justified in women. And three weeks ago two new anti-cancer compounds produced excitement because they looked extremely promising in experiments in mice, though their benefits to people remain unclear.

Neither these nor other experimental cancer medicines are miracle drugs, experts said, but they are representative of the growing number of chemical strategies being brought to bear against the intransigent disease. The two compounds that look so promising in mice block the formation of new blood vessels that tumors rely on. By contrast, paclitaxel stops the

cancer-promoting effects of the hormone estrogen. And Taxol interferes with cancer cell division by tangling up their molecular "skeletons." These and other emerging strategies are part of an broad effort to "get away from highly toxic drugs and toward a rational design of therapeutics," said Lynn M. Schuchter of the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center.

Taxol, known generally as paclitaxel, is made by Bristol-Myers Squibb from the needles and twigs of the yew tree. The drug was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1992 for the treatment of advanced ovarian cancer, and in 1994 for advanced breast cancer that has not responded to other medicines. It is given by intravenous infusion in a doctor's office.

The latest study was the first to focus on women with an early stage of breast cancer, in which tumor cells have spread to the lymph nodes but apparently no further—a form of the disease diagnosed in 75,000 American women each year. All of the women were treated with surgery followed by doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide, today's most potent breast cancer drug combination. But some women received additional infusions of Taxol every three weeks for 12 weeks.

Although the study has only been ongoing for four years, and patients have been followed on average for just 18 months, the rates of the two groups are already so divergent that the benefits of Taxol are beyond question, doctors said.

The death rate in the Taxol group is 20 percent lower than for the standard therapy group—about the advantage conferred by existing chemotherapy drugs when compared with no chemotherapy at all. And the number of cancer recurrences is 22 percent lower in the Taxol group. "It's unusual to see an advantage of this magnitude this early in a clinical trial," said Schilsky. "Taxol's side effects are similar to those of other chemotherapy drugs, including temporary hair loss, tingling of the extremities, and in some cases a dangerous decline in the number of immune system cells."

Bristol-Myers Squibb in Princeton, New Jersey, said the company will ask the FDA to approve Taxol for early, so-called "adjuvant" and positive breast cancer, said spokeswoman Jane Kramer. Doctors noted, however, that they already can prescribe approved medicines for unapproved uses, and several said that in this case they would do so immediately.

Hopes or hype?, page 31

'Partial-Birth' Abortion Ban Shuts Clinics

Barbara Vobejda
and Joan Blakuplo

A BORTION clinics across Wisconsin shut down last week after one of the nation's most sweeping "partial-birth" abortion bans went into effect.

Wisconsin doctors and virtually every clinic in the state have stopped performing abortions, citing fear that because of vague language in the state's new law, they could be prosecuted and imprisoned even for providing other types of abortions.

So-called partial-birth abortion, a

late-term procedure in which the fetus is partially delivered into the vagina before it is aborted, has become the new battleground in the abortion rights debate, with two dozen states across the country passing laws banning the procedure. A similar law has been passed twice by Congress and vetoed both times by President Clinton.

The dispute flaring up in Wisconsin could ensure that this state becomes the center of the intensifying national debate. Its law went into effect last week after a federal judge refused to delay it, making Wisconsin



Bill Gates is charged with using his dominant PC operating system to crush competitors.

Microsoft Sued Over Windows

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

GOVERNMENT lawyers took the world's leading technology company, Microsoft Corp., to court on Monday, filing two broad antitrust suits that seek to set new rules for competition in the digital age.

The suits, filed in federal court here by the Justice Department and 20 state attorneys general, alleged that the software giant has engaged in a pattern of illegal business practices designed to promote its Windows operating system monopoly and crush its competitors.

Although government lawyers are taking on one of the country's most powerful corporations, they are asking for what some experts view as relatively modest changes in Microsoft's business practices. Specifically, they asked a federal judge in Washington to order Microsoft to either strip out its Internet "browsing" software from its upcoming Windows 98 software or include a browser made by rival Netscape Communications Corp. Browsers allow computer users to access information easily from the Internet.

The government lawyers contend that Microsoft, the world's most profitable and best-known software company, is violating antitrust laws by using its monopoly with Windows to force other software makers to use its software. The suits lay out Microsoft's efforts to use the dominant position of Windows to beat Netscape.

But the department's investigation into Microsoft is continuing beyond browser issues. Sources have

said the government will set its sights next on Windows NT, Microsoft's operating system software for corporate computer networks.

The suit filed by the 20 states and the District of Columbia goes beyond the Justice Department case by asking the judge also to force Microsoft to change the way it sells its "Office" suite of programs to computer makers. The states charge that Microsoft's licensing Office, which includes word processing and spreadsheet software, to PC makers in a way that discourages them from licensing competing software.

News of the lawsuits led to a sell-off in Microsoft stock on Wall Street, causing the company to lose almost \$8.3 billion in market value. But financial analysts said they doubted the litigation would have a significant impact on the company's sales and profits in coming months.

Microsoft has long maintained that Internet browsing technology is inexorably intertwined in Windows 98 and cannot be separated without a massive revision of the product. Microsoft loses in court, government lawyers expect the company to offer Netscape's browser instead of chopping up Windows 98.

Recalling what has become a common Microsoft refrain, Gates said government demands to include Netscape software in Windows are "requiring Coca-Cola to include three cans of Pepsi in every six-pack it sells." To that, a senior government official responded: "If Coca-Cola owned the only store in town, it would be required to sell Pepsi too."

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But the department's investigation into Microsoft is continuing beyond browser issues. Sources have

Bored Gulf Teenagers Turn To Drugs

John Lancaster in Kuwait

EVERY night, Ibrahim, a 17-year-old student at the national university here, retreats to the privacy of his room and looks out the floor, facing toward the Muslim holy city of Mecca. Muttering verses from the Koran, he prostrates himself before Allah and begs forgiveness for what he is about to do. Then he prepares a 100-milligram dose of heroin and injects it into one of his veins.

"I pray and then I take heroin," said Ibrahim, 21, puffing nervously at a Marlboro in a social club run by the local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous, where he has come to seek help for his 570-day habit. "I don't know what's happening in this world. I lost my family, my friends, everything."

The diminutive, rail-thin addict is a casualty of an alarming surge in drug use among the citizens of this prosperous desert sheikhdom on the Persian Gulf.

In the seven years since Allied troops cut the country off from the Persian Gulf War, authorities have reported sharp increases in drug overdoses and drug-related arrests. The amount of heroin seized has skyrocketed. Schools are said to be afflicted by substance abuse, including the selling of glue and solvents.

In the view of foreign and Kuwaiti experts, Kuwait's drug problem stems in part from rapid Westernization that has eroded traditional Islamic values in this oil-rich country of 1.6 million, more than half of whom are expatriate workers and their families. Other factors include loneliness, affluence and proximity to Iran, a major transit point for heroin produced in Afghanistan and shipped here on motorized wooden boats.

"It's a market ripe for the picking," a Western diplomat said. "You have a young population (with money), and you have very little in the way of social activities to keep people interested."

After a period of denial, the country's political leaders have begun to face the problem. The emir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah, ordered the formation of a drug prevention committee last year. State television recently began airing special anti-drug campaigns by recruiting addicts.

The country has moved very far from a Western way of life, and this is one of the effects," Ahmed Bakr, a conservative Muslim, said in a memo to the health committee in the parliament, said in an interview. "All of everything that happens in the West, Kuwaitis imitate."

Throughout the conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf, such affluence has caused wrenching social change, including an influx of drugs. The United Arab Emirates recently established a drug treatment facility. "Narcotics Anonymous operates in a number of cities in the emirate, a country of strict Islamic laws where alcohol and drug dealers are decapitated by a federal central square."

"Narcotics has become everything in our lives, whether in Kuwait or America," said Abdul Wahid, director of a Kuwaiti drug treatment center that relies heavily on the Koran in its therapy. "Every family group is facing this problem."

The amount of heroin seized in Kuwait jumped from seven pounds in 1994 to 106 pounds in 1996, the most recent year for which figures are available, according to Interior Ministry statistics.

Drug overdoses killed 52 people last year, compared with 22 the year before, according to statistics gathered by Bahal, who estimated 15,000 of the country's 660,000 citizens use illegal drugs. Drug-related arrests have surged from 375 in 1992 to 841 in 1996, of which a majority—466—were Kuwaiti citizens, government figures show.

Many Kuwaitis see the 1990 Iraqi invasion as a turning point. It sent much of the population fleeing to North America and Europe and, after liberation, exposed the country to even greater outside influence.

Another factor, according to experts, is boredom. Teenagers are tantalized by Western culture absorbed from satellite television or during trips abroad. Yet diversions are few in a conservative Islamic society that frowns on mingling between the sexes and restricts amusement parks to families.

"A gram of heroin [costs \$328], and for Kuwaitis, this is nothing," said Jaber, 31, a former fire inspector who recently finished a 23-month jail term after he was caught with a pound of hashish. "I know of girls 15 or 14 years old who are using heroin."

As elsewhere, drug abuse in Kuwait cuts across class and educational lines. The local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous is directed by Abu Abdullah, 40, a round-faced stockbroker who drives a minivan Lexus and appears to have a mobile phone permanently grafted to his ear. Another participant is Nawaf, 26, an army sergeant who said he began using heroin soon after his release from an Iraqi POW camp in 1991.

After futile attempts at treatment in Saudi Arabia and Switzerland, Nawaf joined Narcotics Anonymous and has not used drugs since beginning his 12-step recovery program in November, he said.

Drug use is heavily stigmatized in Kuwait, and families are reluctant to seek help for an afflicted member. Kuwait has no full-time counseling center, and its main drug rehabilitation unit is housed in a converted World War II army barracks.

The parliament recently approved stiffer drug penalties, including death for traffickers, although the emir has yet to sign off on any executions.

According to officials, the emir's drug committee is laying plans for a major anti-drug campaign, including television programs, advertisements and educational materials.

"The government is concerned, but as in other countries, it works in slow motion," said an Interior Ministry official who asked to remain nameless. "It's a matter of time."



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Initials

Final

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

THE totals given for those killed by Stalin, Mao or Pol Pot usually include deaths from starvation as a result of social and economic policy. While Britain's Indian empire was a thriving concern, famines were not unusual, so can any imperial figures be counted among history's mass murderers?

ABSOLUTELY not, China, which escaped imperial control, suffered even worse famines than India in the 19th century, and continued to suffer them for the first three decades of the 20th century. By this time India, though still subject to occasional devastating epidemics, had effectively banished famine, at least in peace-time.

Indian famines in the 19th century were essentially climatically driven. For most of the year, most of India has little rainfall, but sometimes the intensely wet monsoon season fails, and if there is insufficient stored water, crops fail. When irrigation is inadequate, roads are almost non-existent, and the transport of food is dependent on oxen, famine relief is almost impossible.

The British in India, whatever their faults, gave much thought to the problem of preventing drought turning into famine. By the 1860s, when the rains failed, an established programme for dealing with famine relief was well established. — *Colin Croft, Harrow Weald, Middlesex*

MOST dictionaries define famine as "an extreme scarcity of food". We should not forget that there was a famine in either mid-19th century Ireland or during Stalin's collectivisation programme. Both cases of mass hunger and population extirpations resulted from deliberate government policy to enforce, not bypass, point, the export of huge amounts of local foodstuffs for profitable sale on international markets.

There is no distinction between the two episodes in terms of knowledge of what was going on. In Stalin

was a mass murderer, as he surely was, to was Lord John Russell. — *Nicholas Napier, Rhoads, South Australia*

HAS anyone ever seriously researched that travel?

JW DUNNE'S Experiment. With Time was not concerned with the space-time within which events occur, but rather with the idea of time flowing like a river, on the banks of which the dreamer stood in Time 2, observing the flow of Time 1 events approaching and departing. This leads to an infinite regression of arial times, T3, T4, etc., and conflicts with the idea of space-time within which events occur rather than being swept along by a current. — *Marlin Simons, Stipeps, South Australia*

Any answers?

WHEN was food first preserved in tin cans? — *Bob Davies, Crown's Nest, New South Wales, Australia*

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "Scott-free"? — *Avery, Edinburgh*

EVERY biography of Michael Faraday says that he was a Sandemanian, which I gather is some sort of Christian sect. What do or did Sandemans believe? — *William Loh, Sydney, Australia*

Answers should be e-mailed to enquiries@guardian.co.uk, boxed to 0171-44171-242-0855 or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JQ. This Notes & Queries website is at <http://nq.guardian.co.uk/>

A Country Diary

Mary Kille

TASMANIA: The rays of the rising sun slant through the stringybarks and blackwoods, and across the cleared grass where the wallabies and pademelons browse. An Eastern spinebill, a pair of scrubwrens, and a pair of honeyeaters, moves from one scarlet core to another, inserting its long delicate bill deep into the tubular flowers for a morning feast of nectar.

Over the sea, a group of white-faced herons share a thermal with a white-bellied sea eagle. The eagle breaks away from the circling herons, and glides over the sea, alone and magnificent. We look down on that astonishing back, the brilliant white of its head, and that huge wing-span, with the sticky-grey feathers of an adult bird, its wings held in a smooth upward curve, as it scans the sea for a fish; but its great talons are empty as it veers away from the sea, up over the bush, towards its nest on the far side of the promontory. Nary a sentinel forest roven flies to interrupt the eagle's silent flight, and in a soon joined by a raucous group of other ravens, scattering the eagle from their territory.

Eagle spotting is easy; so often

their presence is betrayed by the behaviour of other birds. The two wedge-tailed eagles we see almost continually harried noisily by the ravens. The brown goshawk and the peregrine falcon announce their presence with high-pitched screams, and at year the important cry of a young peregrine heralded the sight of the parent, closely followed by the youngster. That cry is usually for food, but we witnessed the proving flight of the youngster last year. The parent's immaculate, economical flying contrasted with the out-of-control acrobatic display of its offspring, and its constant, ear-piercing screams.

The rosy clouds on the sea horizon remind us of the smoke clouds we had watched a few weeks ago, slowly drifting towards our part of the coast, from a huge fire that burned out a large part of the nearby national park. Many lectures of the park, a precious flower reserve, are now a blackened desert. We understand clearly that the price of living in virgin eucalyptus bushland is the annual possibility of fire, and we check our fire hoses and gutters yet again. But as the day of anxiety when fire risk prevails is the price we pay for the privilege of looking down on eagles,



On yer bike... Paul Ford on his jet-powered bicycle

PHOTOGRAPH: TONY JENKINS

Inventor powers his bike into history

INTOLERABLY noisy, a fire hazard and not fit for use on public highways — as mad inventions go, this rather highly, writes Amelia Gentleman, Cambridge engineer Paul Ford has fitted a home-designed jet engine to his bicycle and created a potentially record-breaking machine capable of travelling at 100mph. Aside from its speed, the vehicle does have a couple of advantages: there is no need to pedal, and jet power is affordably priced.

But even the inventor accepts that these attractions are outweighed by the problems the prototype bike poses. It emits

102 decibels when stationary, and when it gets going it sounds like an aeroplane on take-off. Then there is the heat. "The exhaust emerges at about 480C — not enough to burn the hairs off your head," Mr Ford warns. Mr Ford, aged 37, co-owner of a model aircraft shop in Cambridge, invented the miniature gas turbine engine in 1995. During preliminary tests at a disused airfield, the vehicle reached 55mph at half power and Mr Ford is confident that, with a bit of work, 100mph will be reached easily.

"I've been too scared to go any faster. The steering is extremely

sensitive, something else that needs refining... I was also concerned that it might actually take off, but the design seems to have prevented that risk."

While happy to accept that his invention is not practical, Mr Ford remains uncomfortable with the mad professor status the creation has forced on him. "I'm pretty certain that this is the first jet-powered bike in Britain. People thought it couldn't be done, and I wanted to prove them wrong."

His addition of a jet engine to a bicycle is a crazy thing to try to do, but I don't think it's eccentric at all."

Letter from Ball David Mitchell

Indonesia's paradise lost

PUTU emphatically punches the calculator keys a third time to demonstrate his parlous financial state. He works the nightshift on one of the sand-marooned island bars on the beach of Kuta, Bali, the very centre of 20 years of aggressive tourist industry development and packaged dreams. Putu is determined to show me again the gulf between his monthly income of 110,000 rupiah (\$12) and his expenses of 240,000 rupiah (\$26) for lodging, food and petrol for his motorbike.

"Clothes! God! I don't even think about them," he says, sucking on his teeth, the Indonesian sign of frustration and resignation. His monthly shortfall is occasionally made up of tips and the offer to act as a guide to his home town of Singaraja, on the dryer, poorer north Bali coast. Tonight, I am one of two customers at the bar between 9pm and midnight.

Kuta Beach serves as an interesting weather vane of the current, decidedly chilly, economic climate in Indonesia. Over the last 20 years more than a billion dollars have poured into this part of Bali, financing hundreds of small businesses in the tourism sector. Unhappily, the jumbled and uncoordinated developments have left Kuta a warren of underserviced roads and paths broken and difficult to negotiate, overflowing with backed-up sewage systems in rain, hot and dusty when dry, and thronged with hundreds of street hawkers at all times.

Since the decline of the economy days of anxiety when fire risk prevails is the price we pay for the privilege of looking down on eagles,

their unemployed friends and relatives from Java. Bargaining with tourists has gained a slightly more aggressive edge, and the *cheng* (screwdriver) has come into its own as the device of choice in the increasing number of burglaries. In ancillary tourism industries the quality of services and maintenance has declined noticeably. In restaurants, menus have been drastically simplified in response to the disappearance of imported foodstuffs.

However, it is not only the informal fingers of Bali's tourist economy that are suffering at the moment. In Denpasar, Bali's provincial capital, Irah and Sastro both work in one of the typically urbanised, tertiary service sector industries that arose in the Indonesia of the 1980s. They earn between 700,000 (\$77) and 1,000,000 rupiah (\$10) a month, have been with their company for four years, and, unlike many acquaintances, still hold their jobs. Polytex-edicated, can-doing, credit card-holding beneficiaries of the boom, they have been left groping by the flood of bad economic news of recent months.

Like many colleagues, both Irah and Sastro have started to bring a simple lunch from home instead of patronising one of the *warungs* (food stalls) on the streets around their office. Sastro has a wife and daughter to provide for and so has reduced his number of meals to two a day. He has valiantly lost weight. Another of their colleagues shaves his head to save on the cost of shampoo, which has increased in price by 200 per cent.

The need to make these seem-

ingly petty savings, sometimes joked about but undertaken with a determined rigour, forcibly indicates to Irah and Sastro the rapid weakening of their buying power. Such an understanding, concomitant with increasingly noisy demonstrations against the regime and open questioning of it in the media, may have begun the politicisation of this group.

Irah, commenting on the now daily press recitation of the corruption, corruption and collusion (KORUPSI) that has bedeviled the country, says: "Never before did we see the about politics, were before. Now, I'm so embarrassed by what I hear." She is upset that Indonesia has been brought to a state of international ignominy by its leaders.

Sastro, for the first time, has started to read the local and international news magazines to which his firm subscribes. He has even taken to photocopying and distributing articles to his workmates.

The impression gained from them is a mix of despair and resignation of the extent of certainty, badly shaken confidence and odd bursts of naive, yet waning hope. The New Order has left them utterly unpured for change, let alone the shocks of the past year.

I often go to Kuta for a surf, just after sunrise. Some of the bars are shut, although they used to be open 24 hours a day. Dozens of people, including very young families, are stirring from their grubby sleep, the sounds. After wading down the beach, they drift back into the *warungs*, hunting for a sort of breakfast. And Nihara called Ball "The Morning of the World"

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 24 1999

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Will wonder drugs never cease?

Natasha Walter

"IHAVE been using Viagra for the past 10 days," says Bill. "At 71, I act like I'm on honeymoon. It is the answer."

"I used my second 100mg tablet of Viagra today," says Pete. "Everything worked perfectly. Whoopee!"

"I tried Sildenafil Viagra," says Ted, aged 55. "Within one hour I have very good results. This looks like a winner! The wife is out so I call up my collection of pornographic pictures."

Some 10,000 prescriptions are now being written every week in the United States for Viagra, the new cure for male impotence. And men are clogging newsgroups on the Internet to report their glee and to share ideas about how to get the drug more quickly. One doctor, who was prepared to prescribe it over the telephone, sent out 600 prescriptions in a fortnight. This is the new wonder drug.

And who wants to stop their fun? If men of 71 want to pretend they're on honeymoon and men of 55 want to masturbate over pornography, who should stop them? This party could run and run.

But, whisper it softly, wonder drugs do have a way of turning out to be poisoned apples. Up to now, it has usually been women who have gazed on that knowledge. Because women are used to being told that

there is a pill for every problem they face, and women have believed the experts and time again, only to wake up the next morning with a bad headache — or worse.

Since the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1957, the popularity of Valium in the sixties and the excitement over HRT in the eighties, women have been encouraged to believe that doctors have a magic bullet in their black bags to make every stage of their lives easier, better and happier.

Men, on the other hand, have long been expected to take what over life threw at them on the chin. Are they now falling for the idea that there might be a pill out there that will take them, with a single swallow, into prairie bliss?

Perhaps they should look at the history of women's wonder drugs, and realise that all these pills tend to arrive on a wave of optimism and frenetic eagerness, only to turn straight into disappointment and scepticism.

Take, if you will, the contraceptive pill. Dr Gregory Pincus, who spearheaded the development of the Pill, was inundated with hundreds of letters from grateful women. As Linda Grant says in her book *Sexing The Millennium*: "They hailed him as a god; they

believed that science could at last liberate them from the chains their desires had forged." But the high-dosage pills that were prescribed then led to a myriad of side-effects: dizziness, nausea and headaches, for a start; and even heart disease, urinary infections and thrombosis.

Hugh Davis, professor of obstetrics at Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC, noted in 1969 that in the promotional materials that accompanied the Pill: "I saw pictures of roses, tulips and peach blossoms. I saw not a word about thorns or worms." Only years later,

he saw HRT as the way into endless youth: "The outward signs of this age-defying youthfulness are a straight-backed posture, supple breast contours, taut, smooth skin, firm muscles, and that particular vigour and grace typical of a healthy female."

In fact, studies show that a significant proportion of menopausal women either never feel the need for HRT, find it doesn't help them, or find that it gives them adverse symptoms. "Women's use of HRT is still a long way from justifying the promoters' optimism," Germana Green noted drily in *The Change*.

Or take tranquilisers. They have never been solely a woman's drug, but as Princess Diana — of all people — once reminded us, women still tend to receive three times as many prescriptions for tranquilisers as men do. During the sixties, the benzodiazepines were heavily marketed as drugs that clever men would give to miserable women. Advertisements told doctors, "Now SHE can cope," or showed a man's hand cradling a woman's wrist with the slogan, "Whatever the diagnosis, Librium."

The real stresses of women's lives were to be smoothed over with a magical, soothing drug that turned out to be addictive and to trigger unforeseen withdrawal symptoms.

Women have learned that the Pill would not deliver sexual nirvana; it

would give to miserable women. Advertisements told doctors, "Now SHE can cope," or showed a man's hand cradling a woman's wrist with the slogan, "Whatever the diagnosis, Librium."

What is more, although Viagra may look like the answer, let's remember that it is an answer for one, limited question, and that question is not "Will I be happy?" but just "Will I be hard?" Even with Viagra, desire and desirability will turn out to be as elusive as ever. Although a spoonful of sugar may help the medicine go down, a pinch of salt is always in order. — *The Observer*

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GW 6/98

Birdsong's ancient magic

Paul Evans

C HIFF-CHAFF, chif-chaff... It's four o'clock in the morning and this warbler named after its stubbornly minimalist song seems to be questioning my sanity. And well it might. On the very edge of the darkest hour, I'm wandering up a mountain in the rain. It feels like an out-of-body experience. It's as if down there, below the trees and drizzle, my real body lies still as a log, watched over by the town's orange streetlights. Up here, my astral wraith stalks the wooded hill in a dream of listening.

Listening is like entering into a secret pact. To do it we must slough off the row and racket that enervates our waking lives and step into the city of birds whose alien language we cannot decipher but must understand intuitively. The time before daybreak, when we're most vulnerable, is a time when we may also be most perceptive. If we open ourselves to the dawn raid of birdsong.

In the dark, dripping woods, the blackbirds, thrushes, robins, warblers and wrens sing with a dreamlike quality. Because of the rain and low cloud, dawn does not "break" but insinuates itself from the east in a gradual bleaching of the sky. Somewhere above the clouds the moon is full, powering spring tides. There are flocks of song and there are less tangible flocks of the land: of regeneration, procreation, flowering and leaping. There is also a tide of the northward movement of birds. Winter visitors have flown back to the tundra and summer visitors are arriving.

Migrant birds from the south, such as wheatears and whinchats, reclaim the hilltop while warblers and white-throats take to the woods. They sweep north with Mediterranean and African values. This birding is not just about the "get off my lawn" denunciation of territory or the "come and get me" transfer of genes from dominant males. It's a proclamation of



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LAMING

existence and exuberance of spirit, in defiance even. When there's not enough light to risk flight there is also little risk of predators. So it is the time for the all-consuming business of mating, nest-building and egg gathering for hatching broods. In the "old style" calendar, the full moon marks the eve of the Celtic festival of Beltane, the May Day spring festival of fertility. Until the mid-18th century, Britain had two calendars operating simultaneously. The "old style" Julian calendar, which was closely linked to the natural rhythms of the seasons and celebrations of nature, and the "new style" Gregorian calendar which was not. In 1752 the "new style" was declared the only legal calendar and this shuffled natural events forward by 11 days. Perhaps it was

also meant to sever links with our pagan past. Birds of course took no notice, wild nature sings to its own ancient rhythms. The people who lived within the earthworks on the top of this mountain 3,000 years ago would have known this day and recognised the same songs from the ancestors of these birds. They would share their place as they shared their mythology with the birds. They would not have thought it weird to wander the woods in a wet dawn to listen. Because birds were central to divination, they would be listening for the future. Without these birdsongs it would not be dawn, day would not begin, the woods would not wake in the rain, and we would sleep in ignorance for ever under the streetlights.

Chess Leonard Barden

MICHAEL ATAMS, unofficially ranked world No 8, has a real opportunity to break into the top five at a grandmaster tournament in Madrid this month.

The British champion is five Fide points behind Gata Kamsky of the United States, who has abandoned chess in favour of a medical career; and 10 lifts of Vassily Ivanchuk and Anatoly Karpov. The world top quartet of Garry Kasparov, Visly Anand, Vlad Kramnik and Alexei Shirov are way ahead, but if Adams can win in Spain or even finish runner-up, he will almost certainly leapfrog over Karpov, Ivanchuk and Kamsky.

Kasparov meanwhile has just completed a match of his own, winning 4-0 at rapid play against Bulgaria's world No 9, Yesselin Topalov, in Sofia, and announced a six-game series with Jan Timman in Prague.

In contrast to Adams, the veteran Timman has really mellowed his intermittent status as a leading Western challenger. At one time he played an annual series against top GMs, including matches against Karpov, Nigel Short and Kasparov (to whom he lost 1-5).

Timman followed the example of his fellow Dutchman Max Euwe, whose contests against the top men such as Capablanca and Bogolyubov paved the way for his 1935 world title challenge to Akhmediev. Euwe surprisingly won, triggering a national chess boom in the Netherlands which has lasted to this day.

Euwe's own model was the great Emanuel Lasker, who as a virtual unknown in 1893 won a series of mini-tournaments against top players and veterans with the objective of securing a title match with the ageing Wilhelm Steinitz.

So the time is surely ripe for Adams, fairly underrated against the world's top players, to follow the route of Euwe and Lasker. In his equal to fit Scots will be sceptical, after Jonathan Rowson crumbled in several good positions in their recent match. But Lasker in his time liked to take his games to a tactical precipice, relying on his strong

nerve in a crisis, and that's what happens here.

Rowan Adams

5th game 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nd5 d6 7 Nf5 Nbd7 8 e5 c6 9 e4 Be7 10 Be2 0-0 11 0 Nc7 12 Be3 He played 12 Bf4 the first game of the match. e6 13 Na3 Bf5 14 Bf4 15 Bf3 Qe8 16 Nc4 Qf5 17 Bf4 18 18 g4 Kc6 19 Bg3 Rf6 20 f4 Qh6 21 Qe1 Nf8 22 f5 Ne4 23 Ra3 Rg3 24 Rg3 Rg3 25 Rg3 Rg3 26 Rg3 Rg3 27 h4 g5 d5 28 Rg3 Rg3 29 Rg3 Rg3 30 Rg3 Rg3 31 Rg3 Rg3 32 Rg3 Rg3 33 Rg3 Rg3 34 Rg3 Rg3 35 Rg3 Rg3 36 Rg3 Rg3 37 Rg3 Rg3 38 Rg3 Rg3 39 Rg3 Rg3 40 Rg3 Rg3 41 Rg3 Rg3 42 Rg3 Rg3 43 Rg3 Rg3 44 Rg3 Rg3 45 Rg3 Rg3 46 Rg3 Rg3 47 Rg3 Rg3 48 Rg3 Rg3 49 Rg3 Rg3 50 Rg3 Rg3 51 Rg3 Rg3 52 Rg3 Rg3 53 Rg3 Rg3 54 Rg3 Rg3 55 Rg3 Rg3 56 Rg3 Rg3 57 Rg3 Rg3 58 Rg3 Rg3 59 Rg3 Rg3 60 Rg3 Rg3 61 Rg3 Rg3 62 Rg3 Rg3 63 Rg3 Rg3 64 Rg3 Rg3 65 Rg3 Rg3 66 Rg3 Rg3 67 Rg3 Rg3 68 Rg3 Rg3 69 Rg3 Rg3 70 Rg3 Rg3 71 Rg3 Rg3 72 Rg3 Rg3 73 Rg3 Rg3 74 Rg3 Rg3 75 Rg3 Rg3 76 Rg3 Rg3 77 Rg3 Rg3 78 Rg3 Rg3 79 Rg3 Rg3 80 Rg3 Rg3 81 Rg3 Rg3 82 Rg3 Rg3 83 Rg3 Rg3 84 Rg3 Rg3 85 Rg3 Rg3 86 Rg3 Rg3 87 Rg3 Rg3 88 Rg3 Rg3 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Cries Unheard
by Gitta Sereny
Macmillan 393pp £20

Yet it was not the tsbroids or the

My book Bell had once tried to write a book herself. If Sereny was properly interested in the woman Mary Bell — and not in a bestseller — she would have helped her to say what she needed to say in her own words, something she had somehow never managed to say. The best parts of Sereny's book are the parts where Bell speaks for herself. Why did Bell speak for herself? Why did she tell us about her life as a young woman to help explain the young woman he admired? One of Sereny's few admirers, Dr Virginia Wilding, "bluntly" advised Sereny to give up on the effort altogether: "She was concerned over the unrelenting intensity of these sessions which would normally, under therapeutic treatment conditions, have probably stretched over a period of years." But Sereny, interested in

THE money question is important for two other reasons. The first is that Sereny and her publishers should have known, if they knew anything, that the victims' families would be offended by it, and the papers, and the Prime Minister even, would follow suit. The life of Mary Bell and her family would be ruined by such a declaration of payment. The second reason is more practical. You don't pay people. When you pay you set up a different kind of relationship with your subject: they want to please you; you want your money's worth.

But Sereny charges on in her high-minded way, determined, against all the difficulties, "to tell her story as completely as it could be told, but

One day she might find a way to speak up for herself. Tabloids like to manipulate manipulative people. And they like to show hurt people what is good for them. I never thought I'd say it. But Gits Sereny could give them lessons.

THERE are so many of them — at least the Greek gods have

its effect on "converted
nor has he visited Arab
to demonstrate how, say,
less fantastical and neu-
iranians. So perhaps it is
to think of this thesis as
sometimes moderated

HE HAS also moderated his judgments; he sees people in a more sympathetic light. Occasionally the old, comically fastidious, Brahminical persona shoots through (the chambermaid

VS Naipaul: a manager of narratives PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN REARCO

unsustainable political beliefs. It is difficult to disagree with his verdicts on Pakistan and Iran, or with the proposition that "religious or cultural purity is a fundamentalist fantasy... [outside tribal communities] everyone lives in his own way with his complexity," but interesting

He concludes: "Perhaps it is this

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Threads of Time
by Peter Brook
Melhuish 241 pp £17.95

Brook presents the declaim as inevitable. Born in 1925 in London, of Russian-Jewish parents, he was lucky enough, when coming upon a cardboard toy theatre as a child, to realise straight off that theatre is not just imitation, but metaphor as well. Although he proceeded dauntingly fast to become director of production at Covent Garden at the age of 22, and to be trusted as one of the star producers in the opulent, bourgeois world of Blinky Bonsumont, he was always inclined, as a genuine intellectual, to question what needs

But Brook's stunning pen-portraits of the high company he has flown in — Beckett, Brecht and Jean Genet are all brilliantly evoked — do make you wonder whether he has not turned into that familiar figure, the artist who deapises what he does best.

Brook has always had a matchless talent for finding the extraordinary in the everyday, and then for dissolving it with humour and awe. You see every self when you see him.

Interestingly, while Brook has been away, it is notable that the British theatre has appeared to improve by contrary principles. A new generation of British and Irish playwrights is giving London's theatres their most attentive audiences in years. The "something" that Brook searches for is, most certainly happening at some of their plays, not because the nature of performance is

A serious reader will put this provocative book on a shelf next to his earlier book, *The Empty Space*, knowing that Peter Brook remains the theatre artist of our time whom it is the greatest honour to quarrel with.

The name of the reviewer of British Cinema books (May 3) should have been Jonathan Coe, not Cooper.

There is much that is delightful about the latest novel, *A Widow For One Year*: it tells the story of Ruth Cole, and her strange entanglement with Eddie O'Hare. In the summer of 1958; Eddie, who is just 18, arrives at the house where his mother lives for a summer job. Ruth is only four years younger than him, and in the middle of a vicious divorce; and young Eddie soon finds himself having a passion-

...they, but on the contrary, that people are serious. Irving's comedy trivialises his characters because that comedy is not unique to them; it could have happened to anyone. One example will have to suffice: Eddie, who grows up to be a somewhat bumbling and pathetic man who does not meet the adult Ruth until 1990. Ruth is now 38 and is 'celebrated' by a novel and a short story, a banned novella; Eddie is 48 and is a very minor novelist. He has long

This novel streams with charm and life, and hustles the reader on a wonderful voyage, from Long Island to the red-light districts of Amsterdam, and back again. It is rich and buoyant. Yet neither in its conception of reality nor in its warmth of comedy does it ever fall to be uncomplicated. And for once, one wanted a novel to fail a little.

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